

Anthropomorphism and symbolic behaviour in the Neolithic
and Copper Age communities of South-Eastern Europe

Studies into South-East European Prehistory
I

**Anthropomorphism and symbolic behaviour in the Neolithic
and Copper Age communities of South-Eastern Europe**

Edited by Constantin-Emil Ursu and Stanislav Ţerna

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*We would like to dedicate this volume to the memory of a great researcher of prehistoric anthropomorphism in Southeast Europe, **dr. Dan Monah** (1943-2014)*

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Chapter 9: About the great religious themes of Vinča culture

Gheorghe Lazarovici, Cornelia-Magda Lazarovici

Abstract

Basing on a large amount of information, the authors present in this article the data regarding some major religious themes of the Neolithic Vinča culture. The study deals with a large spectrum of archaeological finds and complexes, which reflect the worldview and religious beliefs of the Vinča communities. This spectrum includes clay figurines, adornments, cultic inventories, sanctuaries, foundation rites, altars, tablets, etc. An emphasis is being made on the complicated system of symbols and signs, offering insights into the meaning and importance of complex religious motifs and themes.

Keywords

Vinča culture; religion; cult; sanctuary; symbols; signs

Vinča culture, civilization of Developed Neolithic bring and develop new religious themes, some known since Early Neolithic, others starting now. Should not be neglected local phenomena, sometimes developing certain religious themes and their variations! Most commonly can be observed in the Neolithic plastic art (small altars, idols, amulets etc.), in the shape of idols, their position (standing or sitting), or their body parts (hands, head, face, sex etc.). If we look at the wider world of Southeastern Europe and Anatolia, rather western Asia, we find that there are areas where permanent contacts and ethno-cultural exchanges were held. Hence some common themes or religious manifestations, therefore some unity of elements can be observed.

A monumental work, a synthesis of Neolithic plastic arts regarding south-western Europe, but also including Anatolian great themes written by Svend Hansen is the best evidence of these phenomena (Hansen 2007).

Starting with PPN appear temples and sanctuaries/shrines, monumental statues, columns, a well defined religious architecture, with developments spanning in time more than a millennium (Hauptmann 1993; 2000; 2003, 2007; Hauptmann, Schmidt 2000). Then if things do not continue in this way, in Anatolian civilizations with pottery of Early Neolithic appear dozens of community or household sanctuaries in some settlements that can be considered true cities (Çatal Höyük, Hacilar etc.), so we can speak of sites where sacred dominate the profane (Mellaart 1967: 92; 1975: 45, 46, 101, 108; Müller-Karpe 1968: II, 569, Kat. 66, Taf. 105/20; Eliade 1981: 46; Monah 1982: 11-13; 1997: 35; 2002: 11-13; Ursulescu 1992; 1995; 2000; 2002; Monah et alii 2003; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 29, fig. I.17; Hauptmann 2007: 86; Özdoğan 2007: 61). Even in the Danube area, at Lepenski Vir one can speak of a cultic center (Srejović 1967, plan of levels Ia - Ie; Babović 2006) of the pre-Neolithic/Early Neolithic communities of the area. We believe that the 6-7 groups of housing discovered here from almost all levels belong to some "wise men" that plays the role of healers, with attributions and inventories that exceed those of shamans.

Religious manifestations (fewer or multiple) ALSO depend on our level of knowledge, understanding and interpretation. Food, drink, music, dance were used to obtain the sacred force; if they were used by shamans too is difficult to establish. But shamanism is specific for hunter's communities, being older. In Neolithic are present great religious themes well defined, including cultic inventory in temples and communitarian sanctuaries or on domestic sanctuaries. The first two categories contain statues, monumental shrines, objects etc. If we look at one civilization or a restricted area situations depend on the size and importance of the research or custom.

Before we discuss situations in Vinča culture are necessary clarifications regarding

1. For example, in Pavlovac are dozens of male idols in Starčevo-Criș - Vinča A levels, while to us in Vinča A is only one male idol at Gornea.



terms related to some aspects of spiritual life. We consider that temples, communitarian sanctuaries or the domestic ones require a structure and religious organization. The first temples of PPN show that even at that time there was a religious architecture (Rollefson 1993; 1996; 1998; Hauptmann 1993; 2007; Hayden 2003: 198-199, 204, fig. 6.20; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 29, fig. I.17; Hauptmann, Schmidt 2007; Özdoğan 2007: 61; *** *Vor 12.000 Jahren* 2007; Kovács 2010). Statues, monumental columns, altars of these temples, benches and other represent elements that are present too in the Developed Neolithic of the area we investigate here, namely in Vinča and Banat cultures. These include organization and structure. People linking worshipers, these sacred places and divinity, or supernatural forces are officials, i.e. priests or priestesses. WE DO not imagine that a shaman officiate in these temples or sanctuaries. Otherwise, a large work written by Brian Hayden about these issues, defines the shaman as an official person with a social status who achieve *Ecstasies* in order to create a report with the supernatural world in behalf of its members group (Tokarev 1974: 81; see older and new opinions and bibliography referring to: Hayden 2003: 46 sqq., 151, 210, 285, 288, 310, 329, 351, 367, 370, costum 47F, 69, 467, 58, 344). And the spread area, the cited author mention, is the northern Asia, where specific occupations are related to hunting. That does not mean that certain practices related to dance, inherited rituals faded. They persist in more recent times by black² or white magic and others.

Rich bibliography of these problems does not allow us to thoroughly discussed, so we refer to some punctual situations. Some we have discussed in studies regarding temples, communitarian or domestic sanctuaries, or parts of these buildings (Renfrew 1986; Hegedűs, Makkay 1987; Lazarovici Gh., Maxim 1995: 102, 179-181, pl. XVIII-XIX; Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2006a; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006). Some colleagues have resumed these issues (Vlassa 1972: 18-21, 32, 34-36, 38-40, 43-45; Lazarovici Gh., Dragomir 1993: 10-11; Schier 2005; Luca 2001: 90, combat a Celtic belief; others thought about the statues from Padina; Luca 1994: 363/367; 1996a; 1996b; 1996c; 1996d; 2001: 88-89, 90, 154, 158, fig. 6, plan 2a; Ursulescu 2002: 3-7; Ursulescu et alii 1999; Kitanovski et alii 1990: 108, fig. 3, 5; Jovanović 1991: 120, n. 9; Gimbutas 1984: 74, 25; 1991: 261, fig.7-59-a-b; Makarevič 1960: 282, 290, fig. 1; Makkay 1971: 138; Monah 1997: 35, 38, 255, fig. 3/1, 9/1; Monah D. et alii 2003: Aldea 1974: 40-47, fig. 1-4; Moga 1947-1949: 71; Petrescu-Dîmbovița, Rădulescu 1953: 7 sqq; Petrescu-Dîmbovița et alii 1954: 7 sqq; 1955: 165 sqq; Petrescu-Dîmbovița 1959: 63 sqq; 1962; Lazarovici C.-M. 2004; *** *PreistjugZem* 1979, II: pl. XXIVa/b), others discussed or developed in their PhD thesis certain aspects³ but unfortunately only few or parts of them have been published so far (Kovács 2010). To narrow the vast topic we will now refer only to manifestations of Vinča culture. We will exemplify with materials and situations of our research and of those who dealt with these problems in neighboring areas.

Of course, we must remember that there were countless philosophers of culture and religious life with great syntheses such as Mircea Eliade, Marija Gimbutas, Vladimir Dumitrescu, Dan Monah and other, as well as dozens of works that we can not mention here, but we will present them in the case of situations and materials analyzed below.

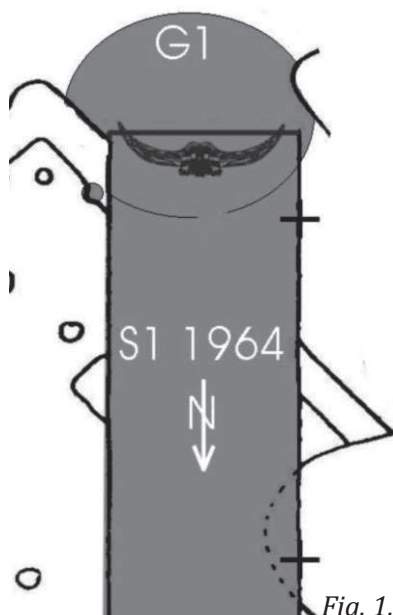


Fig. 1. Zorlențu Mare.

2. An example of a study for pieces of the Banat area: Luca 1990; Drașovean 1996; 1997; Drașovean, Martiș 2014; Petrescu 2005-2006, 90; see also: Tokarev 1974, 78; Frazer 1980, 31.

3. Under Gh. Lazarovici's guidance: Merlini 2009; Angeleski 2011 etc.



Sanctuaries and cultic inventories

The sanctuaries are important because they are the expression of an organized communitarian religious system. In some situation we can speak about temples, such as Parța, Banat culture (Lazarovici Gh. 1985a; 1986a; 1998a; 1998b; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 1991; 2001: 204 sqq.; Monah 1997: 32; Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2002; 2003; 2005; 2006a; 2007; 2008; 2008a; 2008b; 2009; 2010; 2009/2010; 2010a; 2010b; 2010c; Lazarovici C.-M. 2004; 2006; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006, s.v. sanctuaries; 2007 s.v., sanctuaries; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. WEB), where statues, monumental altars or fireplaces indicate an organization of the cult (for communitarian sanctuaries there are over 50 cases in our databases)⁴.

In some cases sanctuaries are located in the main area of the settlement such as Parța, or Zorlențu Mare (in one center, or in an older one). In other cases, such as Lepenski Vir (Srejšović 1969; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 55, fig. I.68-70; Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2010a: fig. 10) or Gura Baciului (trees/columns - Vuković 2004: 84, fig. 1; Stanković 1986; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 72-/73, fig. IIa.10b/11a), recognized as social-religious centers, there are not sanctuaries in the main area.

At Zorlențu Mare settlement in levels 7 and 6, in the main area (with one or more centers/main areas, as well as in Stubline-Crkvine⁵ case) it is a ritual deposition maybe related with the foundation of the site, while this plaza is preserved in all housing stages. This ritual deposition consists of a wild bull trophy (face oriented to the N; opening between the horns of more than 1 m); it was deposited in a bothros (S1/1964) (Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 72-73, fig. IIa.10b/11a) starting from the yellow earth at 2.20 m and descending until 3.15 m

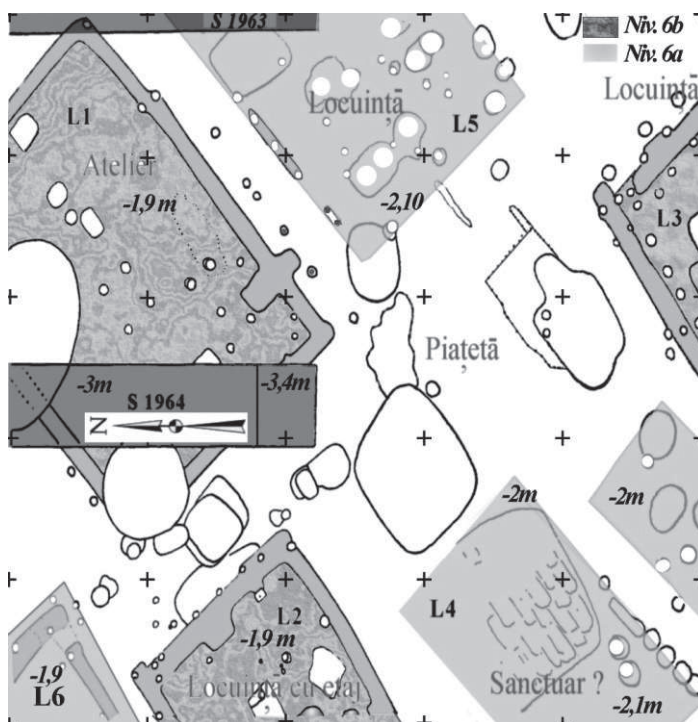


Fig. 2. Zorlențu Mare, level 6, House 4.

Near this pit, to the SW have been discovered two postholes (which did not belong to any of the houses in the neighborhood), which could be interpreted as representing the place of central pillar, as in Gura Baciului case (only one posthole).

In one dwelling of level 6 at Zorlențu Mare, from the main area was discovered a monumental clay head (cca. 35 cm x 15 cm), maybe applied on a wall-column (?), in the eastern area of the room (fig. 3). This monumental head has a triangular mask with a small in relief nose, and traces of a tattoo on his forehead consisting of "V"-s; such signs also appear on some idols or shrines of *Danube script* (fig. 4) (Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 152-156). On face and neck are observed traces of red paint applied over a slip.

4. We indicate just some: Aldea 1974, 40-47, fig. 1-4; Paul 1965, 5 sqq., fig. 1-4, pl. I-II; 1992, 104-106, LII/2-3, 107-108; Sandars 1968/1985, 203, fig. 179b; Ordentlich, Chidioșan 1975; *DEAVR* 1980, 302; Gimbutas 1984, 81, fig. 34; Banffy 1986, 156; Hegedűs, Makkay 1987; Karmanski 1989-1993, 1; Marangou 1992, 184, n. 315-316; Monah 1997, 34, n. 49; Mantu, Ţurcanu 1999; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.1, 237, 246; Marinescu-Bîlcu 2002, 149; Andreescu 2002, 13; Radunčeva 2003, fig. 63, 66, 68; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006, 55, fig. I.68-70; Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2010a, fig. 10; Gligor 2009, 204-206; bucrania: *PrehistJugZemalja* 1979, pl. LXXXVI/5; Jovanović, Glisić 1961; Jovanović 1991.

5. By prospecting was possible to observe that some sites have several centers, as in Crnobrnja 2011, fig. 2.

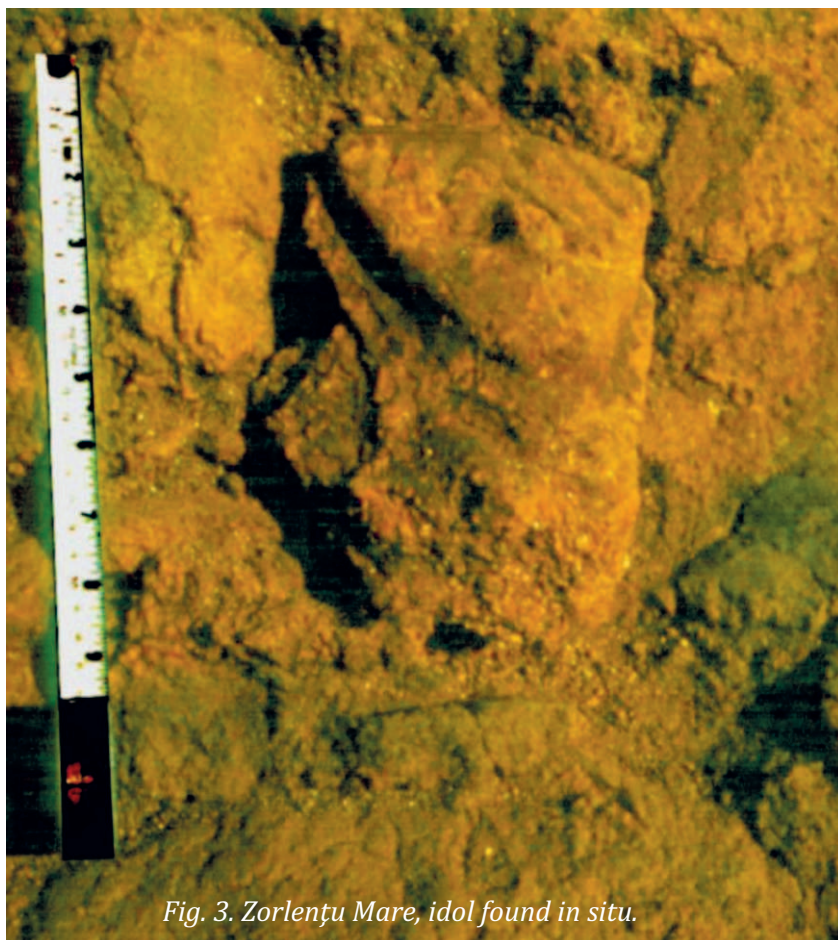


Fig. 3. Zorlențu Mare, idol found in situ.

We can not reconstruct the ceramic fragments discovered in this complex, but they belong to fine and semi-fine categories and have a specific Vinča decor (incised bands, grooves and pleats, characteristic of Vinča B).⁶

At Balta Sărată has been discovered a special dwelling, including several fireplaces, cassettes, and an unfired clay column, similar with the one from Parța Sanctuary 1 and others (Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: 112-113, 116, 209, 268, 275, fig. 88-89, 165-168, 170, Pl. 2, 60/4).

Such unfired clay columns in sanctuaries have some architectonic elements, decorations, heads, bucrania plastered with clay (PrehistJugZemalja 1979: 145-146, 154-158, 184-185, 251,

657, pl. LXXXVI/5; Lazarovici Gh. 1998: 14, cat. 9, fig. 8; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 3, 12, 29, 30, 40, 48, 49, 196, 276, 352-355).

We remember that column and cosmic tree are interpreted as connection between Sky and Earth, *axis mundi*, representing a characteristic of communitarian sanctuaries (Eliade 1981: 42, 51; Monah 1997: 207; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: 209-211; Ursulescu, Tencariu 2006: pl. VIII/2-3).

Other situation is reflected by „*Water column*” from the same site Balta Sărată (Dumitrescu H. 1970: 18; Dumitrescu Vl. 1974: 170, 477-479, 487/1; 1985, 69; Eliade 1981: 51, n. 46; Gimbutas 1984: 78-80; Monah 1997: 34, n. 47; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: fig. IIIa.50b, 51b-d; House 28; Lazarovici Gh., Petrescu 2003): it was discovered in the eastern corner of House 18 (level Vinča B1), involving fragments of an unfired clay column (fig. 9). This column has in the lower part a river stone base, in their middle being discovered fragments of a stemmed cup. The column was stuck about 10 cm into the ground. Considering these attributes we believe that this represent a domestic sanctuary belonging to one of the seven priestesses. Upon her death the house burned, submitted mills face down and adobe of one walls pushed over ritual abandonment deposits. When Houses 18 and 22 at Balta Sărată have been built (but in other cases too) and when were abandoned were submitted seven pieces: one face up, six face down including grinders and polishers or, three and four such artifacts in nearby pits. Obviously we are dealing with rituals related with symbolism of grinder and number seven.

6. The frequent removal and re-inventory of Reșița museum did not permit Gh. Lazarovici to reconstruct inventory of this complex. Later on he realized that monumental statues can not be finding on „all walls”, after a typical Romanian expression.

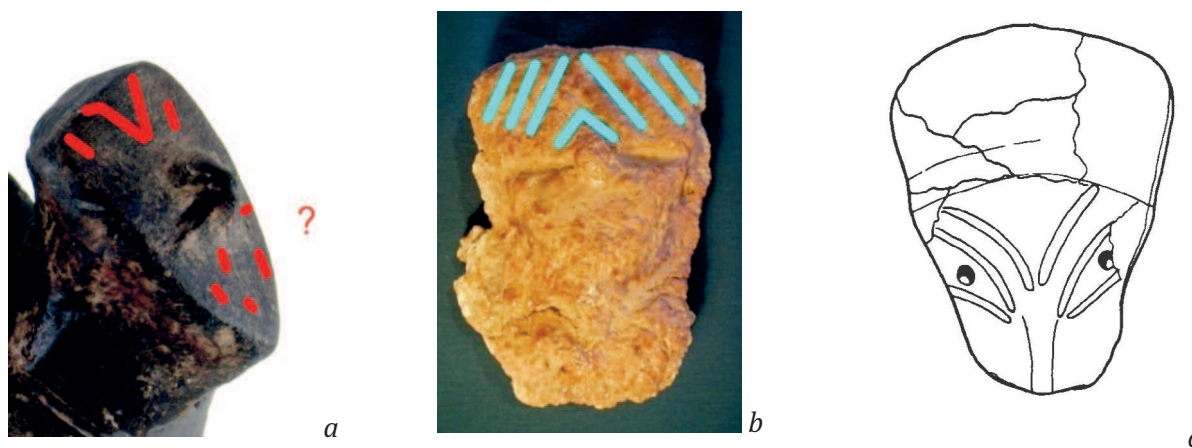
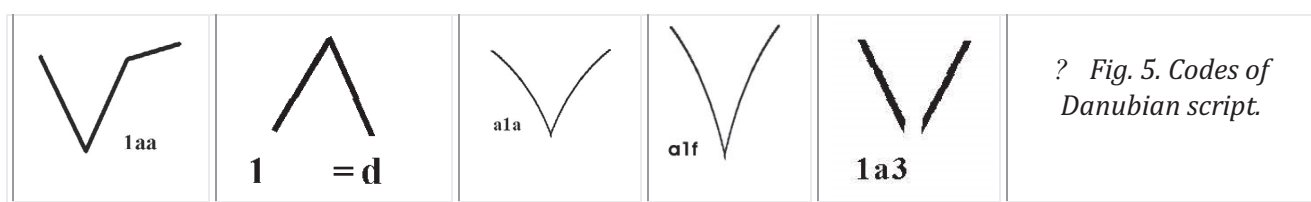


Fig. 4: a) Gornea; b) Zorlențu Mare Vinča A (photo and reconstruction Gh. Lazarovici); c) Bucrania from Kormadin sanctuary.



These depositions, the three fireplace-platforms from the main part of the house (L18) determine us to consider this dwelling as belonging to one of the seven priestesses, connected with sacred grinding, a theme often found in sanctuaries or their clay models as well as in *bothros* (Makkay 1978: 13-36; 1983; 1986; 1987; Ljamić-Valović 1982: 429-431).



Fig. 6. Balta Sărată, reconstruction of House 17.



Fig. 7. Balta Sărată, ritual deposition, grinders.

Grinding stones discovered in the floor are known even from PPN time (transition to Early Neolithic – Mellaart 1975: 76; Müller-Karpe 1968: 314; Rosenberg 2007: 54), in Neolithic at Gura Baciului in the domestic sanctuary P27a and in graves M7 and M4 (from platform 4) and other (Vlassa 1972: 22; 1972b: 191; 1976: 255, fig. 52, 13/3; Lazarovici Gh., Maxim 1995: 148, 180, 185, pl. IV/1-2, V/4), as well as in cult complexes of Copper Age at Turdaș (Luca 1996a; 1996b; 1996c; 1996d; 2001: 88-91, 158, fig. 6, plan 2a), Trușești (sanctuary 5, L38.2), Hăbășești etc. (Paul 1965: 5 sqq., fig. 1-4, pl. I-II; 1992: 104-108, LII/2-3; Aldea 1974: 40-47, fig. 1-4; Gimbutas 1984: 81, fig. 34; Monah 1997: 34; Petrescu-Dîmbovița et alii 1999: 85-88, 65; Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2003: 478, fig. 121; 2005; 2007; 2008, 115, 118; 2008b; 2009; 2010a; 2010b; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2007: 57-58, fig. Va.30).



Fig. 8a-b. Liubcova, after Luca 1989; c, Ruginoasa, Cucuteni A3, after Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2012.

From Liubcova (Vinča B) originate two monumental legs of an altar (one 6 – 8 cm, the other over 18-19 cm) discovered in the same complex, therefore we consider that they belong to a domestic sanctuary (Luca 1985; 1987; 1998: fig. 42/10-11, 43/5; 1990: fig. 8; 1990a; 1991). Other fragments of altars (9 x 11 and 11 x 18 cm), fig. 8a-8b, have been noticed in other places; such altars are common in all stages of Vinča culture. Similar pieces, of big altars have been discovered in other cultures such as Precucuteni (Isaiia) and Cucuteni, at Traian – *Dealul Fântânilor* and Ruginoasa.⁷

Several Neolithic sanctuaries have been identified in Vinča culture at Vinča, Kormadin, Gomolava, Opovo and maybe other with monumental pieces (Jovanović, Glisić 1961; Sanders 1968/1985: 203, fig. 179b: ****Prehist Jug Zemalja* 1979: 145, 146, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 185, 184, 251, 657, pl. LXXXVI/5 etc.; Jovanović 1991; Marangou 1992: 184, n. 315-316, apud Chapman; bucrania: Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: 270, fig. 242, first reference at Miložčić; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 3, 12, 29, 30, 40, 48, 49, 196, 276) (bucrania, decorated big table-altars monumental bull heads etc.).

We have analyzed with different occasions communitarian or domestic sanctuaries from Romanian or South-Eastern Europe territory related with Neolithic and Copper Age time.

7. Isaiia: Ursulescu, Tencariu 2006, 130-132, pl. VII/2; Traian – Dealul Fântânilor; Mantu, Dumitroaia 1997, cat. 133; at Ruginoasa those were unburned: Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2012, 347, fig. VIII.67.



Fig. 9. Balta Sărată, House 28, „Water column”.

Column is an important element of sanctuaries that must not be separated of **cosmic tree or tree of life** and its meaning, i.e. at Căscioarele (the second column having a wooden core), expressing a theme spread from PPN until Copper Age (Eliade 1981: 42, 51; Rutkowski 1981: 47, fig. 4/1-2, 13/4, 12/6; Markevici 1985: 16 ; Dumitrescu Vl. 1986; Dumitrescu Vl. et alii 1954; Monah 1997: 205, 294/4; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: 209-211; Lazarovici C.-M. 2004; 2005). Sometimes double wooden posts in sanctuaries or other cult constructions have to be carefully analyzed while they mark the same thing as column, sometimes with a different meaning, located in main areas such as in Knossos (Picard 1948: 61) case (etc.), symbolizing *axis mundi*, the mentioned connection Sky-Earth (Eliade 1981: 42-43, 51; Markevici 1985: 16 ; Monah 1997: 205, 207; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: 209-211). In Vinča cultures in several cases have been identified cult constructions including one or more columns: Vinča, Kormadin etc.⁸

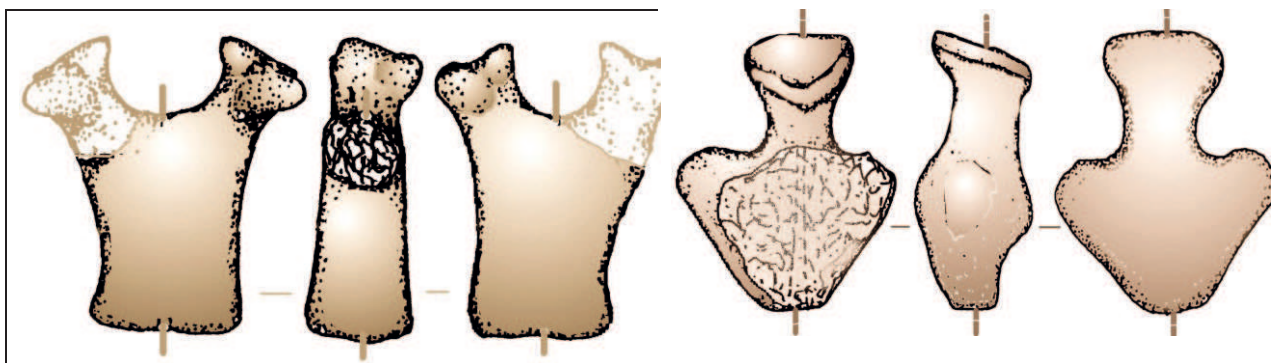


Fig. 10. Liubcova, Vinča C, priestess' inventory.

8. Jovanović, Glisić 1961 apud Jovanović 1991; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, 270, fig. 242, Milojčić idea, defining it as a *megaron*; other comments: Lazarovici Gh. 1998b, 14, cat. 9, fig. 8; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, 116, 209-2110, 268, 275, 305, fig. 165-168, 170, 249; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006, 352-355, 537; Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M.



Contemporary or later are some discoveries from Liubcova (Vinča C) published by Sabin Adrian Luca that can be related with a domestic sanctuary. Other three cult pieces have been found: a bull idol (fig. 10a) and two perforated idols (fig. 10b-c) of Zorlenț type. On the bull chest are tied two strings, suggesting maybe a harness, or just a decoration, while on its hind legs can be observed other two parallel lines (on one leg it is a conical projection). Besides in Vădastra culture was proven the use of cattle traction (Mateescu 1973; 1974; Gheție, Mateescu 1970; 1971).

Sabin Adrian Luca considers these discoveries as a magic kit. Is also interesting to notice that after burning of the dwelling where have been discovered, walls were pushed to the interior of the space, as in the case of Sanctuary 2 at Parța or cult complex at Balta Sărată. We believe that presented inventory belongs to a priestess involved in fertility (water, askos) and fecundity (bull) rituals. Perforated idols represent items of adornment, distinctions (as fig. 10, 36). In our opinion the two Liubcova statuettes (one with mask, fig. 18a, 19); other with askos, fig. 18b-c) belong to a cult complex or represent parts of a priestess kit).



Fig. 11. Balta Sărată, different artifacts, photos D. Negrei, A. Ardeș.



As a result of rescue excavations for the detour road from Caransebeş at Balta Sărată was discovered a *bothros* was investigated by Adrian Ardeş and Dimitrie Negrei. In the *bothros* were deposited some cult pieces and a pot, all fragmented (fig. 11-12)⁹.

This was named **Complex 29** and involves a broken pot (partially reconstructed), a small cult altar with broken legs and protomes, another leg of an altar (of the previous because of paste and decoration, or of a different one), two fragmentary idols (one feminine, one male), some atypical ceramic fragments and a womb fragment of a decorated amphora.



Fig. 12. Balta Sărată, idols, after D. Negrei, A. Ardeş.

What is curious is the coarse paste with a lot of sand used for making idols, altar, as well as other pots fragments. At this stage at Balta Sărată it is also a fine pottery decorated with channels and incisions, but many idols are modeled by coarse paste.

This deposition and the paste of the mentioned fragments and idols have a meaning that we did not deciphered yet. The feminine idol has broken the upper part (fig. 12a) and the second idol has no breasts (is maybe a male); the last one has a mask and seems to have a necklace on the neck (fig. 12b). We place particular emphasis on those combinations of objects as in archaeological literature they are mentioned as having a profane role or representing toys (Talalay 1993; Bailey 2000; Hansen 2007: Teil 1, 319, n. 2).

Leo Frobenius in his ethnological observations concerning Africa, specify that figurines represent toys for children, mature people not given importance to such artifacts, while for the old ones they represent cult pieces, having magic-religious meanings.

About the fragmentation of the cultic objects as a ritual abandonment we have written several times, the best example being the inventory of the priestess named *Lady of Tărtăria*. Broken objects of the ritual pit means the end of their ritually role, but the two phalluses were not broken, because of fear that they can bring trouble in the community (Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011: 141-144, 220, 292, 311 and bibl).

Other analogies for Complex 69 can be found in Turdaş culture, detached somewhere from the Vinča one, so and religious events are correlated. The inventory of L3 complex at Orăştie seems to belong to a male through the idols with several necklaces, belt and short apron, its attributes representing prestige elements.¹⁰ There are such cultic inventories more numerous in Cucuteni culture but also present in other civilizations, considered as parts of communitarian sanctuaries inventory, behind them being the ones they owned and used in cultic rituals.¹¹

9. Presentation at Caransebeş March 2014 and kindly information of the authors; we would like to thank them again for this information.

10. Luca 1994a, fig 1, House L3 1992-1993, Orăştie, upper level, cult complex, maybe a priest inventory.

11. Poduri: Monah 1982, 11-13; 1995, 14-16; 1997, 35; Monah et alii 1983, 15-20; Mantu, Dumitroaia 1997, 109, cat. 14a-d; Ursulescu 2001b, 54, fig. 2; Isaiia: Ursulescu 2001a, 65; Vităneşti: Andreescu 2002, 14; Parţa: M153, P117; Germann, Resch 1981, 3; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, I.2, 33-34, fig. 12; Blagotin S3: Stanković 1983/1992; Vuković 2004, 84, fig. 1; and other: Makarević 1960, 282, 290, fig. 1; Makkay 1971, 138; Mellaart 1975, 30, 59, 131, 186, 214-215; Todorova, Horisjan 1976; Gimbutas 1984, 25, 74, 79-80; 1991, 261, fig. 7-59-a-b; Fol, Lichardus 1988; Monah 1997, 35-36, 255, fig. 3/1, 4; Andreescu 2002, 16.



At Zorlențu Mare, in House 2/1964, under the rubble of a wall were found three idols on a small surface, supposing the existence of a familiar altar.

We have analyzed situations of domestic sanctuaries and their inventories (Lazarovici Gh., Maxim 1995: 102, 179-181, pl. XVIII-XIX; 102; Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2006; 2006a; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006). Discoveries of Banat area related with Vinča culture are not too many; but they were not born in Vinča culture, the importance of this civilization being related with their developing and spread in the subsequent civilizations. The study of previous, contemporary or posterior situations permits us to better understand Banat discoveries.

Although not directly related to the Banat findings we will refer to a group of objects from Vinča – *Bielo Brdo*, discovered in a pit at ▼6.6 m; this was in the neighborhood of an oven and a pots agglomeration related to a cult construction of Vinča B-C (involving a rich inventory, among which a big idol and a pot with two faces, considered by D. Nikolić and J. Vuković (Nikolić, Vuković 2008: 53-55, fig. 2-4) as cultic inventory). At this time there are sanctuaries at Kormadin, monumental bucrania at Gomolava and Vinča (Garašanin D. 1968: fig. 28; Jovanović, Glisić 1961; 1991; Kalicz, Raczky 1981; Babović 1984: cat. 212; Staljo 1986: cat. 218; Marangou 1992: 185; 327, 329 apud Childe; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: 157-159, 250, 275, 276, fig. 250/3, fig. 121 s.v.; bucrania, 275, 276, 278, 279, 280; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 1981: 278/279, fig. 255.3; Lazarovici Gh. 1985a: 55, fig. VI/5-7; 1998b: 13-14, fig. 7, cat. 8; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 197, 354-355, fig. IIIa.81, IIIb. 186, 187b-c).

Breakage of the idols – ritual breakage of the sacred effigies¹²

The largest part of religious objects has been discovered fragmented¹³, less some inventories of priest/priestess kept in entire pots (note 43 here). Pieces deposited in *bothros* also are fragmentary, some of such discoveries we have presented (Macrea 1959: 427, fig. 24; Paul 1992: 104, n. 2; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: 268, 285-287). Intentionally broken pieces could be detected in the case of Tărtăria ritual pit (Merlini 2011a: 125; 2011b: 136, 147, 150-151, fig. VIIB.23-26, 27, 29-30) or in other presented situations of the Vinča culture in Banat.

A statistic study on 300 idols (Lazarovici Gh. 1979: pl. XX-XXII) show that 44 represent females; other 40 idols have not a sex indication. For the entire one, 6 represent females, other 12 having not sex indication. From the fragmentary pieces, 44 represent females, and 40 fragments does not keep sex indication. Head is missing at this undefined type at 16 pieces and on 20 female idols, or the right side of the head in other 20 female idols. Regarding the male idols can be noticed that arms were occasionally or intentionally broken; most often the right arm was broken. Regarding the female idols right or left arm is broken in equal numbers. More numerous are the pieces that lack the right side of the body, especially the feminine idols, 16 fragments.

There are 2 entirely perforated idols (with head and body) with female attributes (breasts) other 6 have not sexual indices. For the category with no sexual indices, 11 pieces seem to have broken the right arm and the left one for 6, but is difficult to establish for this sort of idols which arm is broken. 228), commented or accepted by others, or used a name with a larger meaning, figurines.

Idols or figurines

South central Europe was defined as *idol religion* (Ebert RIV, VII, 19; *** *Idole* 1972; *** *Idole* 1985) area for Neolithic and Copper Age periods.

12. Monah 1997, 202-203; Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2008a.

13. An analysis of the kept parties in south-eastern Europe and western Asia was made by Hansen 2007, passim.



This term was denied by some authors (Bailey 1994 and other works; Monah 2012: 228), commented or accepted by others, or used a name with a larger meaning, figurines¹⁴

Ritually broken or fragmentation, their burial, or deposition in pots, association with thrones or other objects show that they represent cultic inventories, of magic-religious rituals to use a more general terminology. Of course they can also represent toys for children used for teaching the names, characteristics, attributes, role and of course these teachings are associated with myths and rituals. For older people these objects have larger meanings. There are proves for their use in black magic, but how to interpret the white magic that also exists?

To be very honest things are not very simple, but we believe is worst not to present, discuss, comment and interpret these situations. Some assumptions must be launched and sustained. When we discover in temples, communitarian or domestic sanctuaries, monumental statues, double statues, altars, cultic tables and other artifacts, they do not represent anymore sculptures or figurines for interior decoration or toys. Even decorations in most of the cases are related with cultic areas or cultic objects. If you notice that these decorations are related with sacred numerology or color symbolism (with meanings) then you can not neglect the analysis of these situations.

In our opinion in Neolithic we can speak about a "liturgical" of some situations: the best example is represented by the discovery of two "conclaves" or "hoards" from Poduri and Isaiia (100 km distance between the mentioned Precucuteni sites), involving clearly association with sacred numerology (numbers 7, 13, 21, 28, 41 etc.) (Ursulescu 2001a: 53, and bibliography; 2002: 6-7; Merlini 2011e: 324).

Mask (tables 13-15, fig. 16-17)

Our database referring to Neolithic and Copper Age idols involve 2100 registrations, 370 situations referring to Vinča culture, but on phases there are few situations, in many cases data are not always accurate.

Most of the Vinča idols have a mask. We have extracted from our database 100 pieces for which is known the phase. Based on statistic data we can appreciate the mask frequency. The highest percentage is represented by broken heads followed by entire pieces with masks. Situation on Vinča phases is also interesting. From extractions and classifications one can observe a local development starting with early Vinča, A1-A2 (in Vinča A1 there are few pieces) until Vinča B1, what forms and a cultural series. For all phases are characteristic some mask types: M3, M2 și M6. For all three there is an increase and then a decrease in their number.

Table 13	Anthropomorphic	Anthropomorphic bust	Anthropomorphic head	Anthropomorphic face	Sum	Percentage
F1b			1		1	1
M1	7		5		12	12
M2	2		16		18	18
M3	4		4		8	8
M4	2		4		6	6
M4a	1		3		4	4
M5	1	1	1		3	3
M5a	1				1	1
M6	5	2	15		22	22
M7	3	1			4	4
M8	1				1	1
M9			1		1	1
Mb			1		1	1
Hexagonal				1	1	1
Oval				1	1	1
Face				4	4	4
Pentagonal				4	4	4
Rounded				1	1	1
Triangular				3	3	3
Sum	28	4	51	14	100 cca.	
Percentage	28	4	52	14		100

14. Discussions: Monah 2012, 227 sqq.; Hansen 2007.1; 2007.2.



Table 14	A1 A2 phases	A phase	B1 phase				
M5a 		1		M5 		2	1
M3 	1	6	1	M6 	1	12	8
M4 		5	1	M1 		4	7
M4a 		3	1	M7 		1	3
M2 	2	10	6	M8 			1

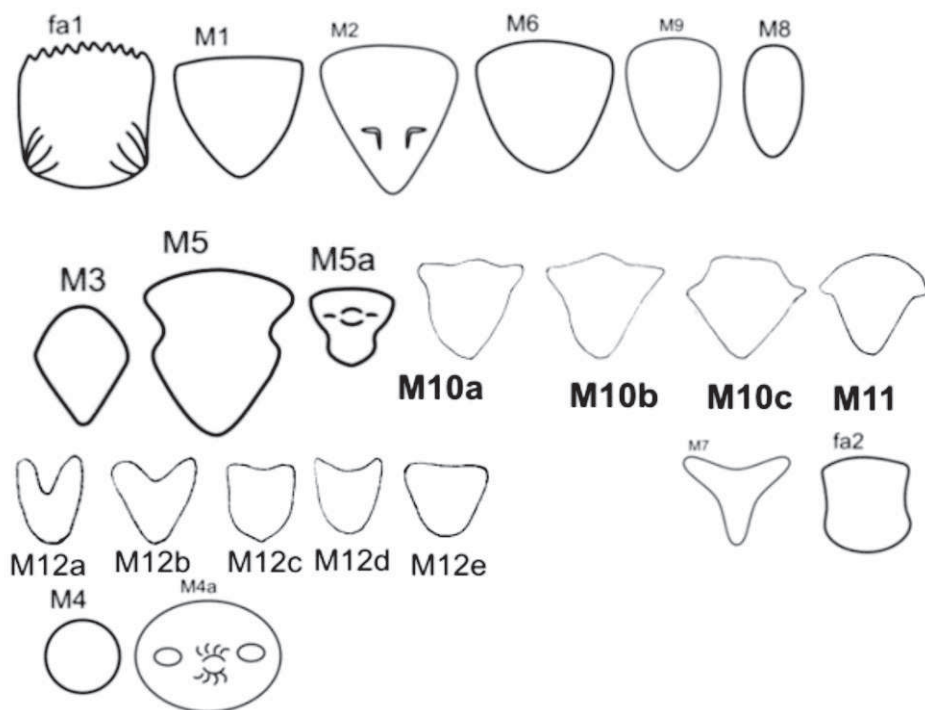


Table 15. Main types of mask, Vinča culture.



Fig. 16. Liubcova mask, after S. A. Luca, I. Dragomir 1985.

Besides the excerpts ones we have specified situations with single artifacts that come from unspecified phase. For the last ones we can observe some variants where mask is rendering traces of domestic or wild animal heads. We recognize mask that renders bucrania (M10 variants), other having wolf ears (types M12a, M12b). M6 type mask is the most frequent in the eponymous site Vinča – *Bielo Brdo* (Tables 13-15; see Annex 1 too).

Also is possible to recognize mask of small animals, highly stylized, rendering domestic animals (sheep, lambs, maybe cattle, maybe dog), without intention of clearly depicting, important was only idea of a mask. This sort of modeling appears frequently on the ends of idol arms (for the type of perforated idols or with movable head, also named of Zorlenț type: in this site have been discovered over 300 entirely or fragmentary pieces - Lazarovici Gh. 1979: pl. XXI-XXII).

The best proof that it is a mask is the artifact discovered at Liubcova and published by Sabin Adrian Luca and Ioan Dragomir (Luca, Dragomir 1985; 1987: fig. 4/1; Luca 2002: 15-28, fig. 1, foto 1-2; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: 281, fig. 258 etc). This Vinča site has the longest deposits from Starčevo – Criș III until Vinča C2 (Comșa, Răuț 1969; Lazarovici Gh. 1979; Luca 1985; 1987; 1990; 1990a; 1991; 1998; 2002; Comșa 1991: 125-131, fig. 1-2 etc).

The best proof that it is a mask is the artifact discovered at Liubcova and published



A, Chauvet Cave.



B, Tasili.



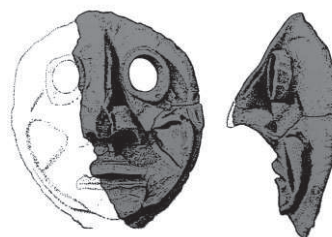
C, Anatolia PPN.



D, PPNB Nahal Hemar Cave, mil. VII, cat. 5.



E, Egypt.



F, Balatonöszöd (after S. Hansen 2005).



G, Varna, grave 2.



H, Menad' mask, 2 century P. Chr., cat. 10.

Fig. 17. Various masks of different historical periods.



Regarding mask we have to mention that is a large literature, while this play an important role in the spiritual world in different eras (fig. 17A-H)¹⁵ from Paleolithic related with hunting (fig. 17A)¹⁶ or in other mythological themes (fig. 17E-H)¹⁷; during Neolithic and Copper Age (fig. 17F-G)¹⁸ there are several variants and types, but mask play its major role starting with ancient civilizations to modern times (in passing rituals especially related to chasing evil spirits; connected with animation: dance, theater¹⁹ etc.) (fig. 17H). There are hundreds of studies, catalogs and various types, if we want to remember only those related with our prehistory (Comşa 1991; Draşovean 2001; 2005; Hansen 2005; Ciută, Florescu 2010).

In Banat area during Vinča culture mask play an important role. Most of the pieces represent some mask variants, often being depicted only nose and eyes; mouth does not occur or occurs less frequently (Annex 1).

At Liubcova was discovered an idol which keeps the mask on shoulder in the left hand (Luca, Dragomir 1987; 1989; Luca 1985; 1987; 1990; 1990a; 1991; 1998; 2002 etc). Body incisions were inlaid with a white matter, while the mask has traces of red color (fig. 18a). Because of the hand position we can not specify what sort of mask is rendered.

Some idols have a hole in the upper part of the head, suggesting that here could be put feathers, flowers, to adorn face.

Mask, signs of magic-religious rituals and distinctions

Theme of Sacred liquid

An example that mask plays an important role in religious magical rites is represented by Liubcova statuettes. One of this has the mask in the left hand and askos in the right hand (fig. 18a); in the second statuette the askos is kept on the right hand holds on chest (fig. 18b-c).

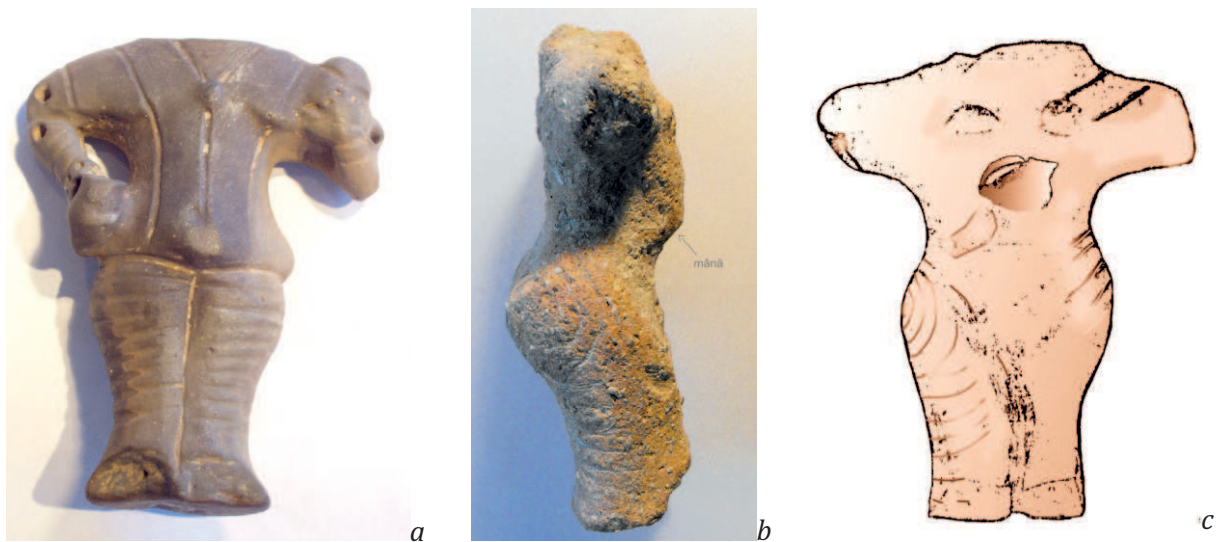


Fig. 18a-c. Liubcova, statues 1 and 2 with askos, our underlining's

15. Constantin 1985, 334, 339.

16. Leroi-Gourhan 1964; 1983; Müller-Karpe 1968; 1974; Sandars 1968/1985; Gimbutas 1982; 1984; 1989; 1991 Marangou 1992, 184; *** XIII.IVICSPPS; Chirica C. V. 1996; Chirica V. 2004; *** Vor 12.000 Jahren 2007.

17. Vulcănescu 1970; Dăncuş 2008; 2010.

18. Monah 1997, 202; Lazarovici C.-M. 2003; 2004; 2005.

19. Leroi-Gourhan 1964; Monah 1997, 201-202, apud Höckmann 1968, 141.



Sabin Adrian Luca connected these rituals with sacred liquid, in relation with *askos* (Luca, Dragomir 1987; 1989; Luca 2002: 15-28, fig. 1, photo 1-2 etc., see upper). This sacred liquid theme is present in several cultic situations (his dedication, receiving, pouring or scattering/libation, significance etc.) of different periods, most often by *askos*, pots held by idols or placed on altars, small cult altars, as was noted by us or different researchers (Sandars 1968/1985: 164, 246-247, fig. 159; Rutkovski 1972: 199, 213; Karagheorghis 1977: 43; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001.1: 274, 279-281, 285, 289, 291, fig. 263; Ursulescu 2001a: 53-54, fig. 3/3; Ursulescu, Tencariu 2006; Lazarovici C.-M. 2004: fig. 42; 2005; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2007: 115, 134; Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2009: 251).

Between different liquids we underline sacred sperm suggested by the three males (bull, male goat, ram) depicted on an altar with three erect *phalluses* at Kahti (fig. 20).

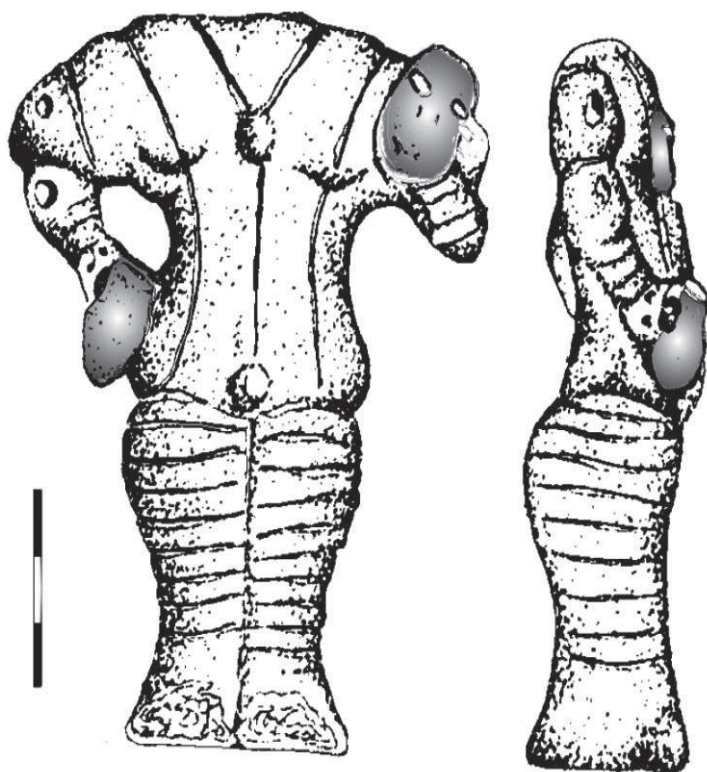


Fig. 19. Liubcova statuette, after S. A. Luca.



Fig. 20. Kahti altar, after Karagheorghis 1976.



Mask and symbols of power or distinction

A special case, but not singular in Vinča culture, is Tărtăria, with *Lady of Tărtăria* cultic inventory. The pentagonal idol mask with nose, eyebrows and traces of painting has on the crown openings for the introduction of feathers. Masks with feathers (feathers being a distinction feature) have been noted in ethnographic and ethnological context, in Neolithic but also in earlier periods (Vulcănescu 1970; Leroi-Gourhan 1983; Chirica C. V. 1996). Marco Merlini makes a detailed presentation regarding the meanings of ritual pit situations of Tărtăria (Merlini 2011e: 314-337).

The hole of idol back allowed the introduction of a stick (fig. 21e). The best analogy is at Stubline – *Crkvine* (Crnobrnja 2011) where such sticks permit attachment of scepters molded as axes and of a round scepter. This discovery belongs to late Vinča phases. It is possible that such axes represent copper items, but there are also such artifacts made by polished stones.



Fig. 21. Tărtăria idol.



These groups of artifacts discovered at Stubline remember the group of houses here.²⁰

20. See the prospecting plan and group of pieces: Crnobrnja 2011; other scepters: Draşovean, Topolovcici 1989.



a



b

Fig. 22a-c: Stubline – Crkvine, after A. Crnobrnja 2011.



c

Recently in Belgrade we have discussed with investigator of this settlement Adam Crnobrnja; he drew our attention to the fact that on the images of magnetic prospecting at Crkvine can be observed several groups of complexes and in each one is a house differently oriented as others, which may play a different social role compared to the rest. „Crkvine conclave” add to well known of Precucuteni culture from Poduri and Isaiia (Monah 1982: 11, fig. 12; 1987: 35; Monah et alii 1983: 15; Ursulescu 2001a: 65; Ursulescu, Tencariu 2007: 108-119, cat. 25).



Idols with an animal mask. Meanings

At Zorlențu Mare two idols' mask end wolf or dog ears (fig. 23/1) have not breasts, suggesting a masked male (Comșa, Răuț 1969: fig. 1.1-2). These idols have analogies at Vinča site, also representing males (sex is represented by a lump) (fig. 23/3-4). Wolf theme is known since Early Neolithic, being associated with the light (altars from Dudeștii Vechi). Very likely to strengthen social functions in the community there was a mythology of animals, represented by idols and plastic art with attributes and characteristics.²¹

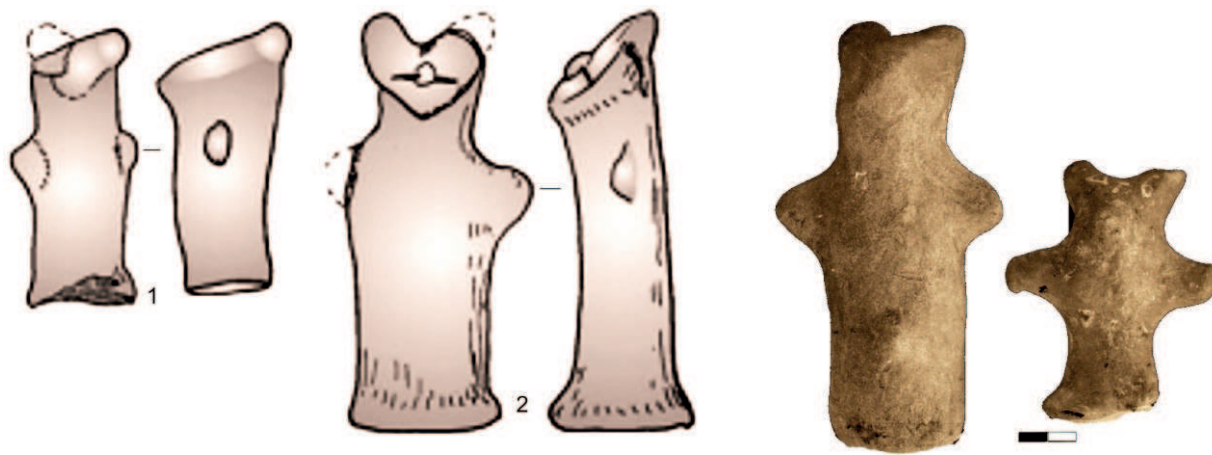


Fig. 23. Idols with a wolf mask: 1-2, Zorlențu Mare; 3-4, Vinča.

Column-animal idea is underlined by other four artifacts from Zorlențu Mare; column is sometimes and the symbol of phallus (*Prehist Jug Zemalja* 1979, pl. LXXXVI/5A; Radunčeva 2003, 283, fig. 130), as are rendered some later or earlier idols (*Prehist Jug Zemalja* 1979, pl. LXXXVI/5).



Fig. 24. Idols: 1-3, Turdaș (photo J. Marler); 4, Zorlențu Mare.

At Turdaș on pot lids (fig. 20/2, 3) are rendered idols with masks similar to those discovered at Zorlențu Mare, (fig. 20/4), depicting different animals (wolf, bear and maybe other) (Roska 1941: pl. 142.20). Other artifacts discovered at Zorlențu Mare belongs to the same theme (fig. 25/ 1, 3-5), small columns with animal heads having an elongated or short muzzle and short ears. As in the case of cylindrical idols their base are straight and permit to be sitted on small cultic tables²² Other fragmentary cylindrical piece has ears and incised decoration on the neck. Idol head (fig. 25/1, 5) by its shape is rendering a horse or onager, remembering Liubcova or Gornea scepters.

21. Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 146, 251, 242, 249, 256; see our interpretation, Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011: 205-207, fig. VIIC. 68-69; Ursulescu 2001a; 2002; Ursulescu, Merlan 1997; Ursulescu, Tencariu 2006; 2007; see above problems related with sanctuaries.

22. Merlini 2011b: 143, imagined such a situation, fig. VIIB.17.

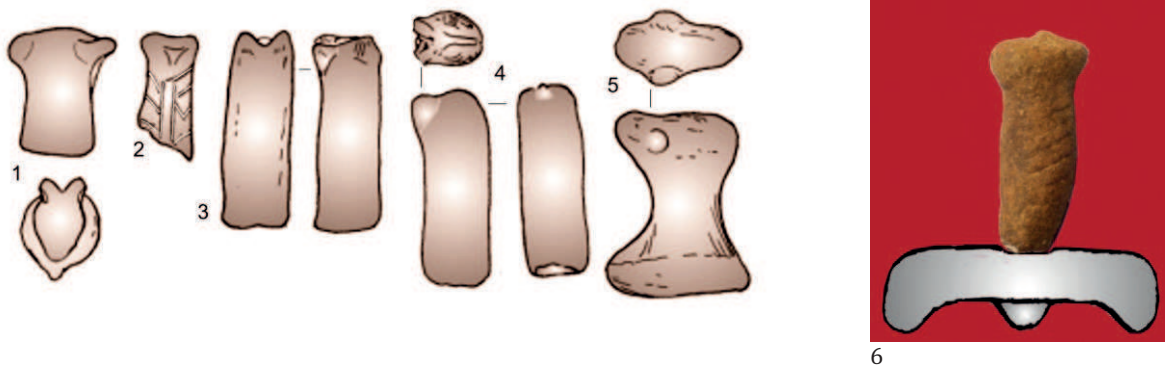


Fig. 25. Zorlențu Mare: 1-5, idols with a zoomorphic head; 6, Vinča B, altar toy, type 6b and idol.

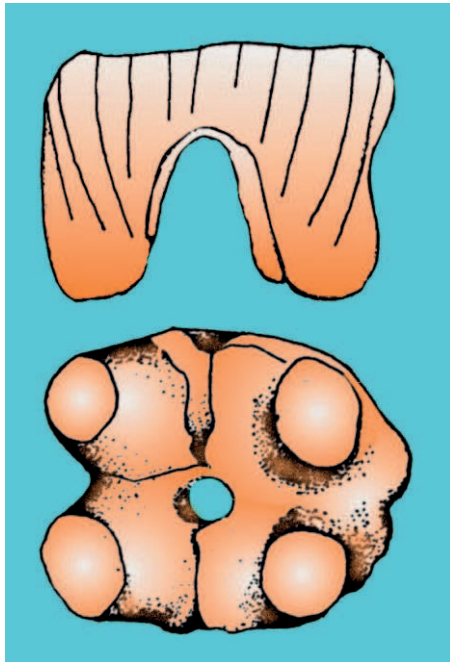


Fig. 26. Zorlențu Mare, Vinča B.



Fig. 27. Tărtăria, phallus on an altar, after Merlini 2011b.

We do not deny that some artifacts may represent toys. Other artifact (a pot) used in the end as spoon, has a head that is difficult to decide if belongs to a human, animal or bird (fig. 24/4). The trace of cutting or broken on the rim indicates a pot with an empty belly, afterwards transformed in a spoon. The mask rendered on the head has eyes similar with an owl, several times moulded on lids. Analogies that we have previous presented with Turdaș, Vinča and other (that we will not detail here), shows that it is a common myth wide spaces spread – from northern Serbia until the Middle Mureș basin and not only in this area.

Sexual organs – birth

There are only few pieces related with sexual organs, as well as some opinions about artifacts with a *phallus/phaloi* aspect presented upper. One artifact from Zorlențu Mare depicted a phallus (fig. 28a) with a slightly inclined base allowing to be placed on a table-altar (in general the surface is not straight), bench or a domestic altar.²³ Phallus shaped artifacts have analogies on idols, or pots (inside or external) (fig. 28) etc. (Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011). One of Zorlenț type idols (type IIIa) has a phallus shape, as the one discovered at Vrșac - *Kozluk* and other examples are related with south area (Lazarovici Gh. 1979, 94-95, 97, fig. 8.IIIa, n. 210/211).

23. Table-altars and benches have been noticed in sanctuaries: Makarević 1960: 282, 290, fig. 1; Berciu 1961: 420-421; Makkay 1971: 138; Mellaart 1975: 53; Gimbutas 1984: 74, 25; 1991: 261, fig. 7-59a-b; Jovanović 1991: 120; Hauptmann 1993; 2007: 86; Röder et alii 1996; Monah 1997: 35, 255, fig. 3/1; Andreescu 2002: 15; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 29, fig. I.17; 2007, fig. Vc.76; Hauptmann, Schmidt 2007: 79; Özdoğan 2007: 59, 61; etc.

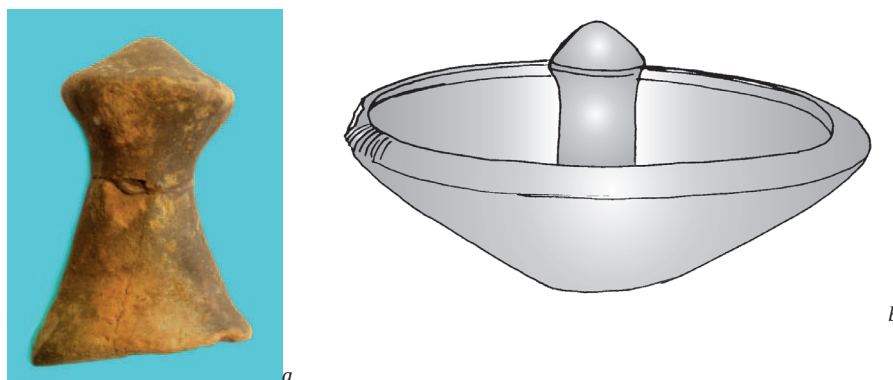


Fig. 28. Erect phallus: a, Zorlențu Mare, Vinča B; b, Pločnik, pot with an erect phallus.

The birth and vulva. Generally scenes related with birth are very few. On a pythos from Gornea is rendered a vulva (fig. 29); manner of rendering and analogies suggest a vulva prior to giving birth (fig. 30-31) (Lazarovici Gh. 1977a: pl. 53.25).

Theme is related with birth and rituals connected with this moment. In this way vulva is depicted starting with Paleolithic (fig. 32/1-2), in Mesolithic, in Early Neolithic (fig. 31) and other situations commented by us or other colleagues (Leroi-Gourhan *apud* Hayden 2003: 133; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011: 159, 282, 301-302, 312, fig. X.27, 29; *Masken 2005*: 52, fig. 53; WEB s.v. Ghassulian etc).

In connection with birth we can relate a fragmentary idol made of a sandy paste, with a lot of incised signs (fig. 35) (Comșa, Răuț 1969: fig. 2.16). These signs located on the chest, belly, between the thighs, on the back side are connected with scenes of birth giving idea and child representation.



Fig. 29. Gornea, Vinča A.

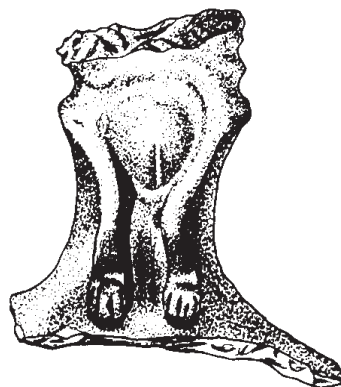


Fig. 30. Woman giving birth.

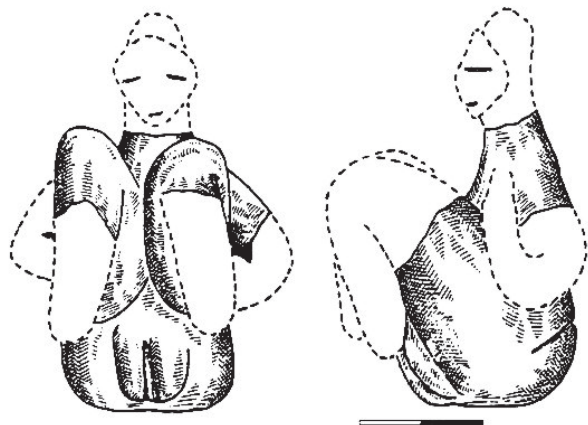
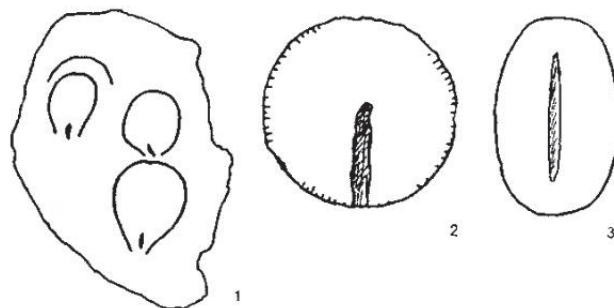


Fig. 31. Achilleion, after S. Hansen 2007.



Goddess' generative organ: 1 – France, ca 30,000 BP; 2 – Czechia, ca 15,000 BCE [382, p.295]; 3 – one of Neolithic plaques found in Israel.

Fig. 32. Depictions of Paleolithic (1-2) and Neolithic (3) vulva.



Fig. 33. Gumelnița culture, after R. Andreescu 2002.



Fig. 34. Lepenski Vir.

The sign of pubic area (code om 9b, 214c, Danubian script), completed by reuniting it with one of the chest (suggesting a pendant), represent a baby (fig. 35c-d). The sign from the neck is also a child (copil 249). Reuniting the sign from the neck with this located between the thighs result an image suggesting the beginning of the birth; in fact is a baby coming feet first (fig. 35). On the back side of the idol it is the same sort of pendant, representing a child (fig. 35b) where start two thin incisions; they could present hair braided into two pigtails. This sort of schematic presentation of the child on the chest and back side of the idol through a pendant was meant to protect child during gravity period and the process of birth of bad situations. At the waist is a belt of semi oval shape imitating shell girdles. It is known that belt and diagonal are signs of

distinction (Monah 2012, fig. 68/9, 36/7, 9; Hansen 2007.2, fig. 208/14, 490, 495/12). They illustrate a social status in the middle of society of the wearer, but may have an apotropaic role too: shell links fertility, creation and birth.

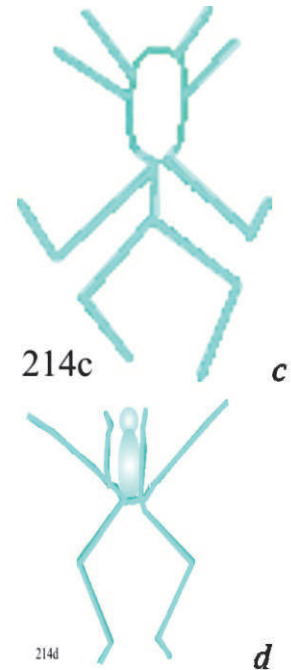
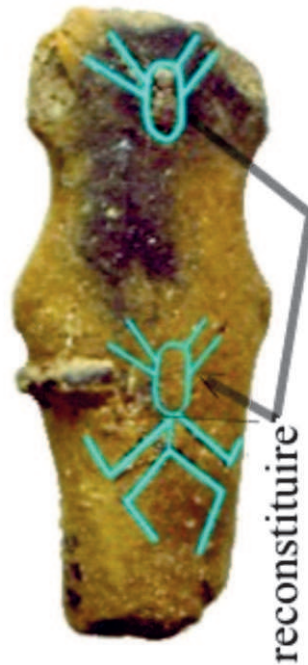
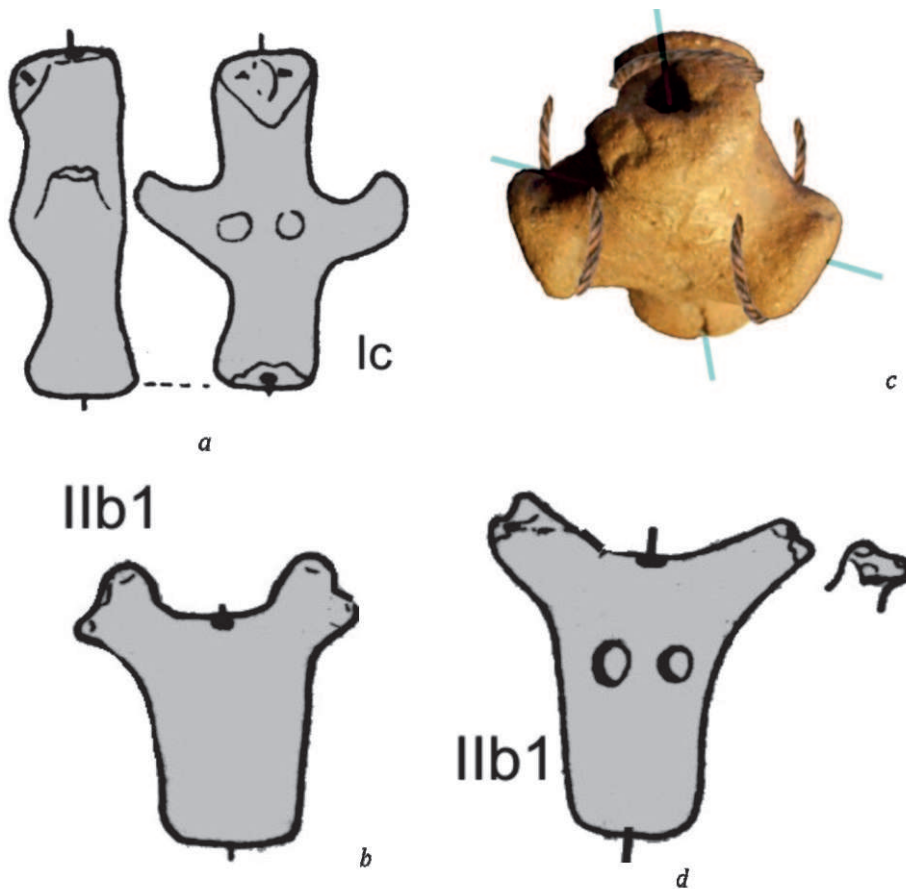


Fig. 35. Zorlențu Mare idol, a-b, ▲ front-back; c-d, our reconstructions.

This remind Greek-Roman mythology, where Aphrodite / Venus was born of the sea foam on a shell.



Idols and amulets of Zorlenț type (also known as *amulets of Bicke type*) (Peters 1954; Makkay 1968; Kalicz 1998: fig. 19) have on the body arms, near orifices, traces of erosion determined by strings.²⁴ We try a reconstruction of the wearing model (fig. 36).



Some of these represent anthropomorphic idols with a vertical perforation. Others have breasts suggesting females, the ones without suppose males. One of this, with breasts, has a mask and a lump represent belly, suggesting pregnancy (fig. 36a).

Fig. 36. Zorlenț type idols worn as amulets.

Regarding the adornments very suggestive is a male idol discovered at Ruginoasa (fig. 37); on the neck are shown four necklaces or strings of beads or cord; on the chest are depicted two discs (similar with some tablets which were hung or worn on the chest, see Tărtăria fig. 38 (Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011, 162, pl. VIIC2, 6; pl. X.3)). From collars go down five strings of beads (saltaleony type) groups. Are known some idols with 1-2 strings of beads but never five as in this case (Monah 1997: fig. 121/11, 126/7, 175/5, 201/2, 9, 203/5, 221/9).

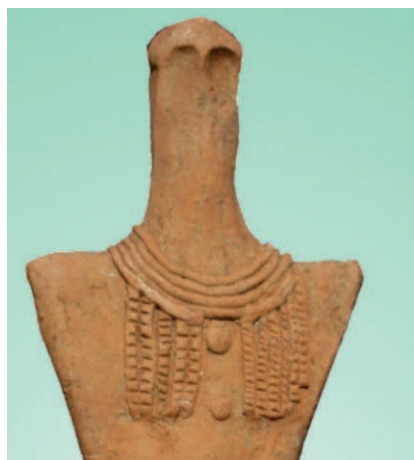


Fig. 37. Necklaces, pendants, Ruginoasa Cucuteni A3.



Fig. 38. Tărtăria, model of wearing the tablets.

24. Special attention was given to this issue by Professor Octavian Răuț which prepared a study in this regard, unfortunately remained unpublished. A number of ideas belong to Professor Octavian Răuț.



In fig. 39 we have presented a model of tying and wearing, to observe how such pieces can be hanging. These sorts of pieces were worn at religious ceremonies, festivities, dances. Sequential position of the pendant (fig. 39b) or the shape defines family hierarchy or family totem. Therefore we do not adopt the idea of *Thessalian idols* or *idols with moving head*.

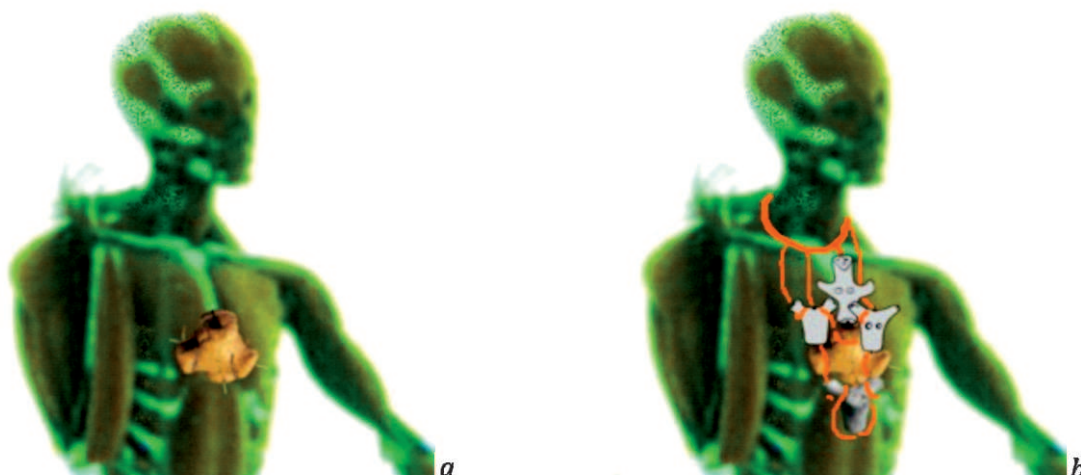


Fig. 39. Reconstruction of fitting and wearing Zorlenț idols type.

Scepters (fig. 40)

We will present here two miniature scepters, one from Gornea (marble, fig. 40a) and Liubcova (alabaster, fig. 40b). The meaning of Gornea²⁵ artifact that represent a wild donkey /onager (hemion) head used as scepter belongs to N. Vlassa (Vlassa 1963; 1978: fig. 9; Maxim 1991: 177, cat. 94; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011: 32, 122, pl. VI.19-20, 150/151, 153) and we accepted.



Fig. 40: a, ▲ Gornea, Vinča A; b, ▼ Liubcova; c, Turdaș ▼.

25. Lazarovici Gh. 1979, pl. XX.C1; Gornea 1975, square 3, ▼0.60 m.



This scepter made by white marble (fig. 40a) was completed with particular care. The asymmetric end of the artifact has two holes that permit fixation with a nail in a wood or horn queue. Conical hole allows a firmer insurance while contact surface is greater. It will be necessary a microscopic investigation to look for resin residues in the hole.

Marble fragments are known at the end of Early Neolithic in Banat (Dudeștii Vechi – Lazarovici Gh. 1968), rim of a bowl or of a plate, but such material is more common in Developed Neolithic.

The second scepter, discovered by S. A. Luca at Liubcova (level IVc; fig. 40b) made by alabaster or chalk, has a head modeled as horse or onager head, its shape being very similar with the one of Gornea (Luca 1990: 33, fig. 1/4a-c; 1991; 1998, etc) and having analogies at Turdaș (Torma Zs. 1897: pl. 66.20; Vlassa 1978: 43, fig. 7, n. 155). These scepters, as we have seen up, are meant to mark a certain rank of the wearer.

Themes, man – bird, bird. The flight.

The bird represented by the eagle, owl, rooster and others is frequently met in prehistoric mythology. Starting with Early Neolithic is present in mythology as the messenger of the gods, a symbol of flight and connection between the Sky and the Earth (Mellaart 1966; *The Anatolian Civilization* 1983, 196-197, cat. 512; Vulcănescu 1987; Luca 2001: 54/55 fig. 10/7a, 11/4, shamanic flight Hayden 2003: 149, fig. 5.20 apud *Antiquity* 62, 559; Hauptmann 2007: 87; Hauptmann, Schmidt 2007: 67; Lazarovici Gh. 2001b: 60-65, fig. 1-2, fig. 5-6 of Çatal Höyük in Sanctuary 26 level VII) as appears later in archaic mythology.



Fig. 41: 1-2) Zorlențu Mare, Vinča B-C (type Vd); 3) Stubline – Crkvine.

Is rendered with some signs such as *cross band*, symbol marking the idea of divinity, a common theme in the plastic art of the Balkans' Neolithic (Lazarovici Gh. 1979: pl. XX/D6, 9, G4, XXI G5; Hansen 2007.1: 123, fig. 46, after Talalay 1993: pl. 1; Hansen 2007.2: fig. 8/8, 82/6; 250/10, 22; 255/1, 271/1; 279/6, 9; 321/3; 325/5-7; 328-329; 377; 407; 461-469; 472; 493; 494/3; 495/2, 4, 6, 8). Theme goddess - bird is widespread and was largely commented by M. Gimbutas and others (Mantu, Dumitroaia 1997: 193, cat. 58-62, and bibl). Adam Crnobrnja published this group of idols discovered *in situ* (Crnobrnja 2011) all having a mask shaped as a bird (fig. 22b-c); we believe they represent the cultic inventory of a priest. These grouping of idols reflect for sure a social hierarchy of manly character, as the author underlined. „Priestesses” inventory as we present here or with other occasions²⁶ are known, but those belonging to „priests” are rare.

26. We accept very rarely for Neolithic "shaman" inventories. We use terms "priestess/priest". We consider characteristic for shaman: bones, stones, crystals, drums, claws of birds, animals etc., but not idols.



◀a, b▶

Fig. 42. Zorlențu Mare: a) type Va; b) variant of IIIc3 type.

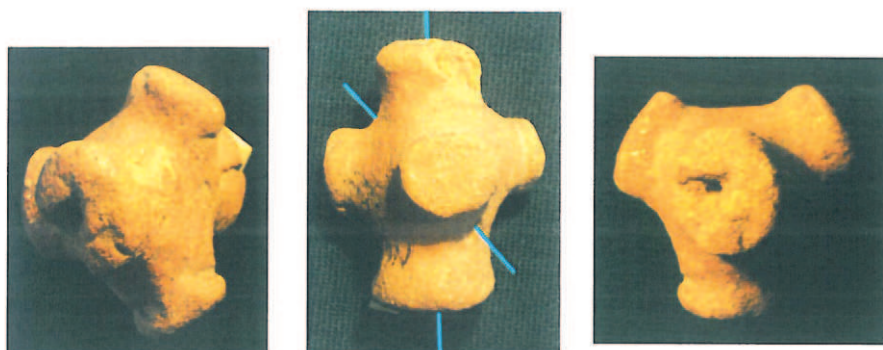


Fig. 43. Zorlențu Mare, type IVc, perforations and TRACES of strings.

dance, or *hora*, a theme very much presented on Cucuteni cult pots (Marinescu-Bîlcu 1974; Dumitrescu Vl. 1979: 80-81, fig. 170; Mantu, Dumitroaia 1997: 190, cat. 51, *apud* Matasă 1946: 123, fig. 249). In some cases they can also represent children toys; we do not deny this possibility, as we did for other artifacts. On *Zorlenț* type idols the bird is suggested in a sitting position (type Va, fig. 42a), with analogies at Vinča, in Vinča B2 level.

Dance and music

The dance theme is very old and wide spread in prehistory and in other periods (Mantu, Dumitroaia 1997: 239, Cârniceni, cat. 254; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: 282-283; Lazarovici C.-M. et alii 2009, Brânzeni III - Țiganca *apud* Bicbaev, Cat. 434).

A p o t f r a g m e n t representing a dancer from Zorlențu Mare (fig. 44) was cut from the upper part of the vessel partially completed and included in several exhibitions and never reunited with the other fragment.



Fig. 44. Zorlențu Mare, Vinča B, Orant 1.



Fig. 45. Zorlențu Mare, level 6, Orant 2.

A part of this vessel remained in the house (in the eastern area of a large one investigated in 1964) located in the neighborhood of the square. Arms remember an *orant* position but this posture is also typical for dance, as well as the legs (fig. 44). Dancer expresses an aesthetic, emotion, erotic, mystical movement, as was noted by Chevalier and Ghebrant (Chevalier, Ghebrant 1995: s.v).

From the main area of the same site, on the same level with the sanctuary (Zorlenț level 6) was discovered a fragment with another dancer with raised arms in an *orant* position (fig. 45); this fragment also belongs to a pythos (with a sandy paste).

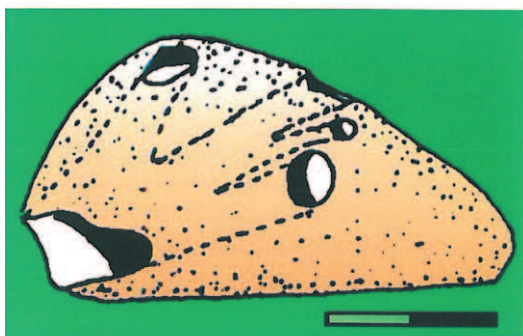
Ocarina

In relation with dance and music can be interrelated a clay artifact with several small holes and an empty space inside discovered at Liubcova (fig. 46-47) (Luca 1998: 208, fig. 39). If we introduce indoor water (fig. 47, through the hole down with traces of bonding) and then blow can obtain some musical sounds of different tones (based on the movement of the fingers and piece's inclination). It is a sort of ocarina who can imitate the sounds of birds, based on the ability of blowing.

Besides bone flutes from different eras this is one of the earliest musical instruments. Bore (where perforations were made) must be filled with unfired clay to retain water and produce different sounds determined by water gurgling in the holes (of different thicknesses and depths, fig. 47).



Fig. 46. Liubcova, Vinča B-C, ocarina.



Viewed from the front, the artifact looks like a stylized skull. Dance and music are an example of individual or collective union connected by the magic that expresses and often has a ritual character.

Fig. 47. Liubcova, Vinča B-C, ocarina, perforations' directions and water space.



Elements of magic and some mythological themes

Some artifacts of Zorlențu Mare have been connected by Florin Drașovean and Sorin Petrescu with black magic activities (Drașovean 1997; 2005: 27, fig. 23; Petrescu 2005-2006). These pieces that we will present have some incisions on different parts of the body. For sure may be several assumptions therefore there is need to be searched and other explanations and analyzed each case (Drașovean 1997; 2005: 29, fig. 23 and bibl). Many of inexplicable actions of prehistoric man are related to magic and we list some objects, situations and gestures (some already analyzed: **splitting, breaking, burying**);²⁷ talismans, religious formulas, wearing of objects, insignia on objects etc. Except for a few cases is difficult to draw a boundary between black magic and white magic.

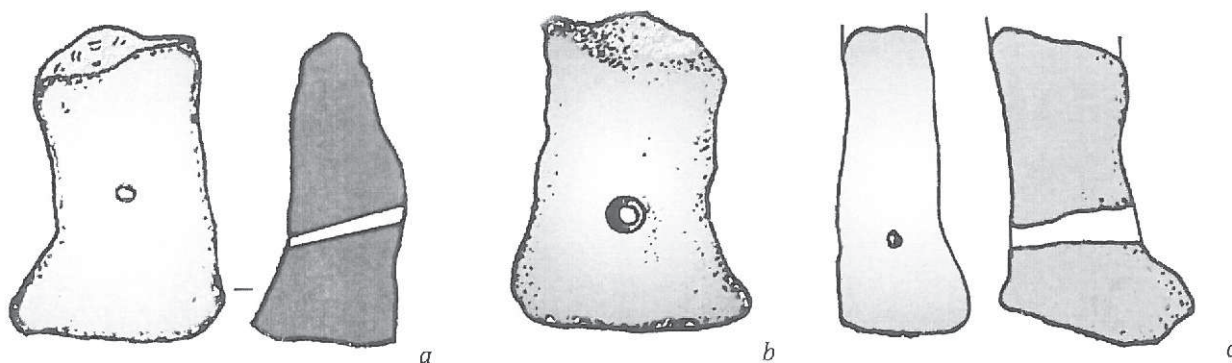


Fig. 48. Gornea, Vinča A.

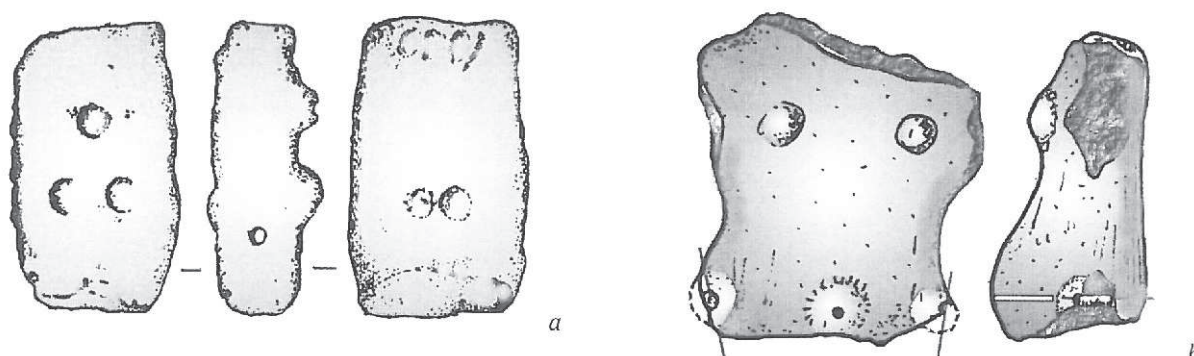


Fig. 49: a, Gornea Vinča A; b, Zorlențu Mare, pregnant woman.

If idols that present interventions after firing, more precisely holes, can be related with magic actions other perforations made before firing can have multiple explanations. This is not the case with Sânanđrei idols. An analogy is at Limba where, an idol has a deep perforation on the womb (Ciută, Florescu 2010: 117, fig. 16).

At Gornea have been discovered several legs (fig. 48), separated modeled (?), or fragments of statuettes, altars that present a lateral hole made before firing. Is difficult to connect or not with black magic, but... if we think on Greek-Roman mythology about golden sandals, flying of Hermes-Mercury used by other heroes of Greek mythology we can imagine mounting of feathers, to suggest **flight, magic flying** and more (Eliade 1981: 212 sqq.; Hayden 2003: 149, fig. 5.20), theme also known in Turdaș culture mythology (Müller-Karpe 1974: III, kat. 98, 297/26; Luca 2001: 54/55, fig. 10/7a, 11/4; Maxim et alii 2009: 153-155). Moreover, there are many analogies on the topic regarding the foot, sacred boot and others (*The Anatolian Civilization* 1983: 196-197, cat. 532; Müller-Karpe 1974: III, kat. 98, 297/26; Luca 2001: 54/55, fig. 10/7a, 11/4; Maxim et alii 2009: 153-155, cat. 107-119).

27. Monah 2012, 231-232 and bibl.



Fig. 50. Zorlenț, Vinča B.

category of artifacts in this settlement or at Balta Sărată (Lazarovici Gh. 1979: pl. XX.15, 17, 19). The mentioned orifice was made before firing (as shows the border of the hole) but its purpose we do not know.

Sorin Petrescu has published three pieces from Balta Sărată (Petrescu 2005-2006): a clay head with a shape between sphere and rhombus, and face barely sketched (cca. 6 cm), fig. 51a; an idol having an oval mask with two holes until half body in the heart area, fig. 51b/1; the

last one is an anthropomorphic idol which has a cut on the right side of the sternum and a perforation near the navel, fig. 51b/2. We note that the body parts concerned are vital for survival: head, heart, liver, and belly with pregnancy; others are connected with. Other are related to the thighs, which affect walking (breaking legs at Donja Branjevina – Karmanski 1989: fig. 5, cover 1, 4). Sorin Petrescu believes that these idols are related with black magic. But in our opinion they can be also related with white magic: mentioned orifices could allow evacuation, leakage of evil, inside infections, or pains etc.

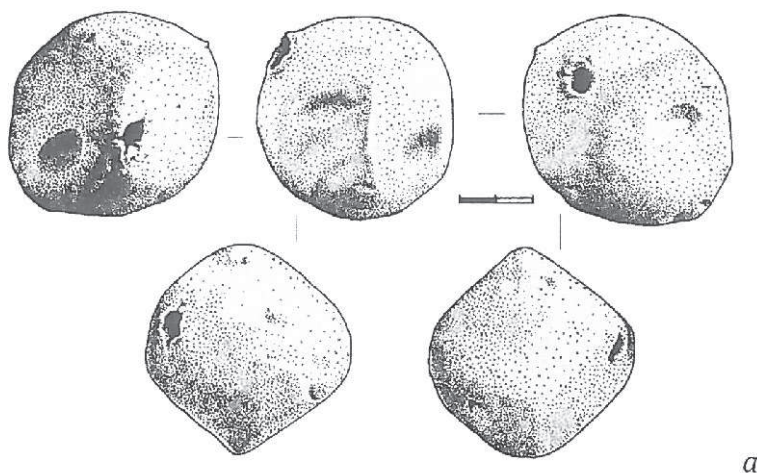
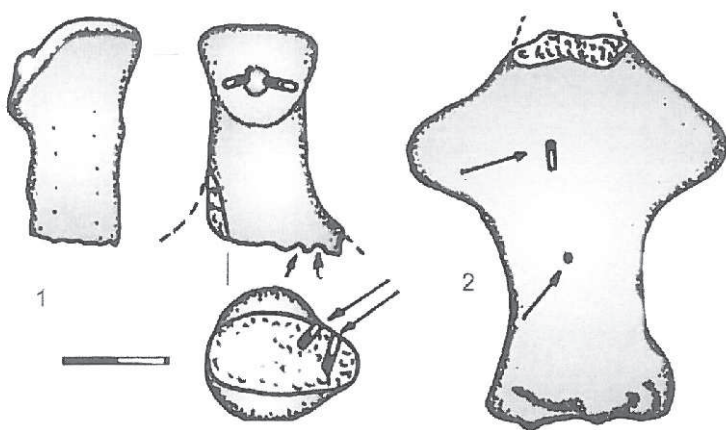


Fig. 51. Balta Sărată: a, Vinča B head; b, fragmentary idols, after S. Petrescu 2005-2006.



But the manner orifice was molded in soft clay, before firing, gave the opportunity to be worn as pendant (fig. 39).

In these cases the main problem is if magic refers to the person (then artifacts have to be considered as



figurines with personification role for individuals), or artifacts illustrate idols representing a certain deity; in this last case, action is to attract attention by prodding, breaking (related with wishes).

Some idols are buried in certain positions that transmit messages, as at Donja Branjevina, or are related with foundation, abandonment rituals (upper presented) (Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 21-22, 41-42, 146; 2007, 55, 69, 91, 115, 124, 132-133, 161, 167, 561, 594; Lazarovici Gh. 2009), or death of a person.²⁸ As we have notice are broken ritual idols (Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011: 135-139, 145-148, fig. VIB. 24-28, 38), tablets (Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011: fig. VIIC 41-43, 48, 55, 58, 62, 65, 67-69, and bibliography), pots (Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011: 160, fig. VIIC.38-39, and bibl.) and so on. Breaking is linked to the scrapping of inventory worship, or death of the person (Tărtăria, *Lady of Tărtăria*).

Breaking means that another person can not use the artifact, and the broken part of it "accompanies" the deceased in his "journey".

Breaking the fireplace and breaking of the worship fireplaces?

Among objects ritually destroyed or dismantled should be included and some fireplaces. This has an important role since Mesolithic representing the source of light and heat. Fireplaces are present in sanctuaries, domestic sanctuaries having several cultic functions: burning of offerings, maintaining the sacred fire and light (Petrescu-Dîmbovița, Rădulescu 1953: 7 sqq; Petrescu-Dîmbovița 1959: 63 sqq; Petrescu-Dîmbovița et alii 1954: 7 sqq; 1955, 165 sqq; 1962, sqq; 1999: 117-121, fig. 86-87; Srejović 1969: Pl. 3, 6, 11, 16-18, 20, 23, 29 32, 35, 36; fig. 9-10 a. s. o.; Vlassa 1970a: 169-174; Aldea 1974: 40-47, fig. 1-4; Monah 1982: 11, fig. 12; Monah et alii 1983: 15; Monah 1997: 38, 46, fig. 9/1; Paul 1992: 107-108; Suskovka 1: Gusev 1995b: cat. 42, fig. 5/2; Șerbănescu 1997: 235, fig. 2/4, 4/2; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: I.1, 112-113, 116, 270, fig. 88-89; fig. 165-168, 242, Pl. 2, 60/4; Andreescu 2002: 16-17; Lazarovici C.-M. 2002; 2004: 47, fig. 1, 20; Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2003: 478, fig. 121; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2007: 57-58, fig. Va.30).

At Gornea was such a fireplace fragment (18 x 10 x 5 cm), decorated with parallel stripes pulled by finger. The fireplace was intentionally broken two fragments being in the filling of pit house B21b (Vinča A1 phase). By technical point of view and used motives the closest analogies are represented by the monumental statue at Parța.

In the archaeological and ethnological literature is mentioned the destruction of the fireplace when the house is abandoned, as some fireplaces belonging to Parța sanctuary (Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: I.1, fig. 165-168). Such situations have been noticed in other complexes of the same site in Casa Cerbului,²⁹ as well as at Gura Baciului,³⁰ Ruginoasa etc (Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2007: 127; 2012: 60, 63, 68, L4, fig. IV.44). For the fireplace related with houses were recorded other rituals (under it, on it, near it). At Suplacul de Barcău in one of the last investigated pit houses belonging to Zau II culture was discovered a pot lying on one side *THAT* have no a functional role.³¹

28. At Tărtăria; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011, 215ff and bibliography.

29. Lazarovici Gh., Merlini http://www.prehistory.it/ftp/parta_archaeological_excavations2006_01.html

In Gh. Lazarovici excavations, in the area of B10, B23, in early Starčevo-Criș levels.

30. Excavations made by Doina Ignat and continued by Gh. Lazarovici (report, ms.).

31. Zorleț, Su. 1973, inv. A 4209, no. 461 of archaeological excavation.



Fire and light

For the house, sacred house, sanctuary fire and light have multiple meanings that have to be retained and analyzed.

„Chandelier – Candle” (fig. 52 a-d)

A very interesting artifact was discovered at Zorlențu Mare (1973, levels 4-3, Vinča B2-C)³². Is a pot with an unusual round shape, quadrilateral body, bigger than a tray / platter, made by an ashes color paste mixed with mica. This pot has four pairs of twin vertical handles with large holes; these holes converge up to a point, reason for which we consider they were used for hanging. We interpret this pot as a sacred candle (fig. 52a).

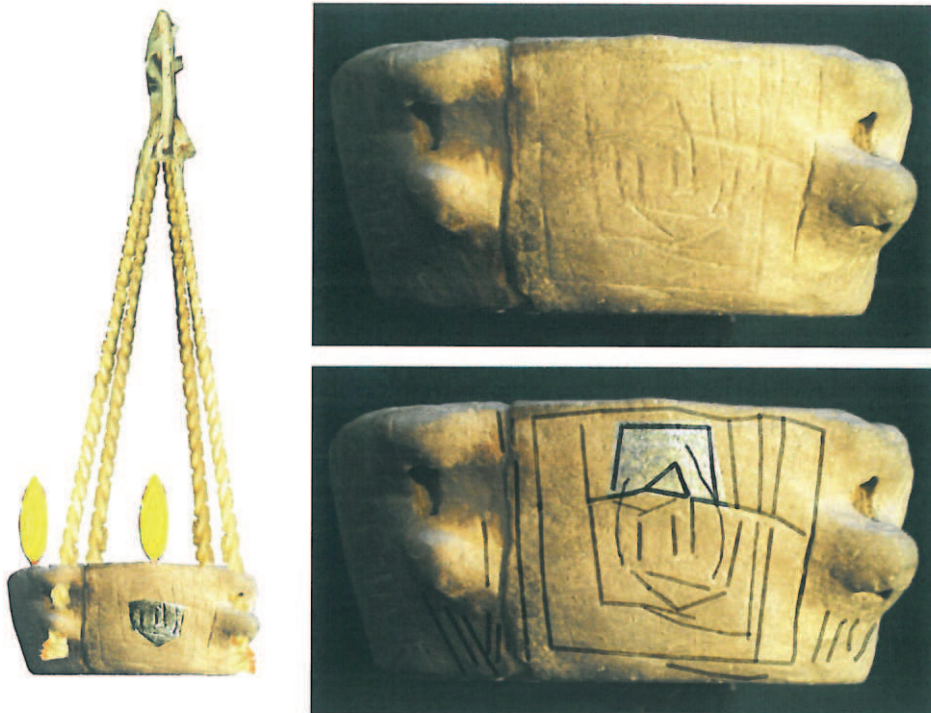


Fig. 52a-b. Zorlențu Mare, Vinča B2-C: a) reconstruction; b-c) symbols on one pot face.

Visiting several times *Polgar Archaeological park* (Hungary) (Raczky et alii 2002) and observing carefully ethno-archaeological reconstructions thence we imagine functioning model of this candle (fig. 52a). The pot has several signs and symbols, some of them common with *Danubian script*. On pot faces there are many signs and symbols that we have marked (fig. 52a-d).

We have to remember that on some pots are outlined objects that seem put in the mirror

(vertical or horizontal). In this way are rendered Zorlențu Mare house or thrones on Tărtăria tablets (Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011: 162 sqq) . On one wall of Zorlențu Mare pot is drawing a house model with entrance, suggesting a temple or a sacred house, as on other sanctuary models, stella or small altars/lamps³³ The apparent reversal of the house is willful to be seen from above, from heaven by divinity, thus emphasizing the idea of ritual offering of the light, fire and smoke.

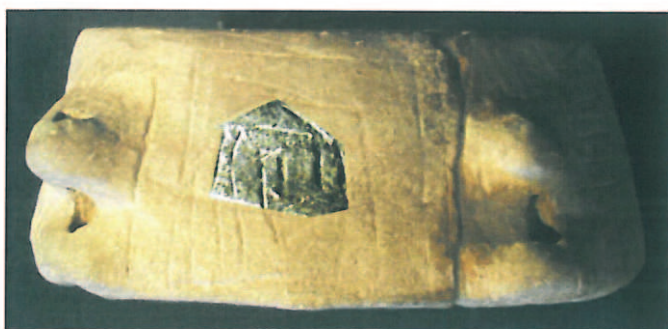


Fig. 52d. Zorlențu Mare, Vinča B2-C; model of a sacred house.

32. Zorlenț, Su. 1973, inv. A 4209, no. 461 of archaeological excavation

33. Stella of Vădastra: Gimbutas 1984, 76, fig. 40; Dumitrescu Vl. 1968, fig. 66; *** Neolithic Art, Olten 2008, cat. 97.



Altars with three legs³⁴ occur at Vinča A and maintained until C level (fig. 53). They were used for placing of idols, but especially for the lighting of the houses, having in the same time a ritually role.



Fig. 53. Tables-altars, Gornea, Vinča A: 1, type 1bb1; 2, type 1be.

The Gornea exemplar shows that light was protected by a human head with mask, a ram head, the third one accidentally or ritually broken may belong to a bull.



Fig. 54. Vinča A, Gornea, type 1b.



Fig. 55. Turdaş, analogy.

On the body and legs are traces of red and yellow painting, in crusted technique, organized in meander bands; both colors underlined idea of fire - red and light - yellow. Altars with three legs maintained until Late Neolithic, in Turdaş culture (fig. 55). But excepting exemplars of Vinča A the other did not have symbolic paintings or protomes clearly modeled; they had only a functional role, as lamps, and the corner protomes are just stylized.

Symbols and signs of invocation – orant

A boundary between the symbol and the sign is difficult to draw, however there are differences. Sometimes were stated definitions (Lazarovici Gh. 2003; 2004; 2004a, 2009; Merlini 2011b: 156) other times signs were reinterpreted as symbols (Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011: 163 sqq). Marco Merlini analyzed different meanings that have symbols on the Tărtăria tablets or other of *Danube script* as signs (Haarmann 1995; Haarmann, Marler 2008; Merlini 2011b: 159 sqq., s.v. symbol).

Orant, by its invocation position, rising of hands to heaven, is easily identified in

34. To us types 1a-1b with sub-variants; group 1 at Stanković 1983; 1992, pl. I-II; see here and analogies.



different situations. Of course it can be and has been associated with dance, as we shown up in fig. 44. It is found in different situation: in sanctuary as monumental pieces;³⁵ on cult pots (especially in Gumelnița culture – Isăcescu 1984; *** *Neolithic Art, Oltenia 2008*, cat. 108-109), on idols depicted on pots of several periods;³⁶ numerous in Vinča, Turdaș (Vlassa 1966; 1976: 100-106), Cucuteni (Monah 2012: fig. 111/1, 9; 113/8, 129/1; 168/4; 205/1, 3-4; 207/1; 209/1; 211/1, 3, and so on) etc., as figures of rock art (Drăguț 1983, Tasili, passim), of which passed as symbols and signs.

There are many such pieces in Banat area (belonging to Vinča culture), especially in the group of *Zorlenț type* idols. One very interesting (fig. 56) is related with *Zorlenț IIIb type of idols*. To make the scene more clear and evident on both sides was rendered oranta (code M 7). Between the upraised arms are shown two eyes, suggesting *divine eyes* (code 171a, 172a) pursuing rituals or invocation gestures.

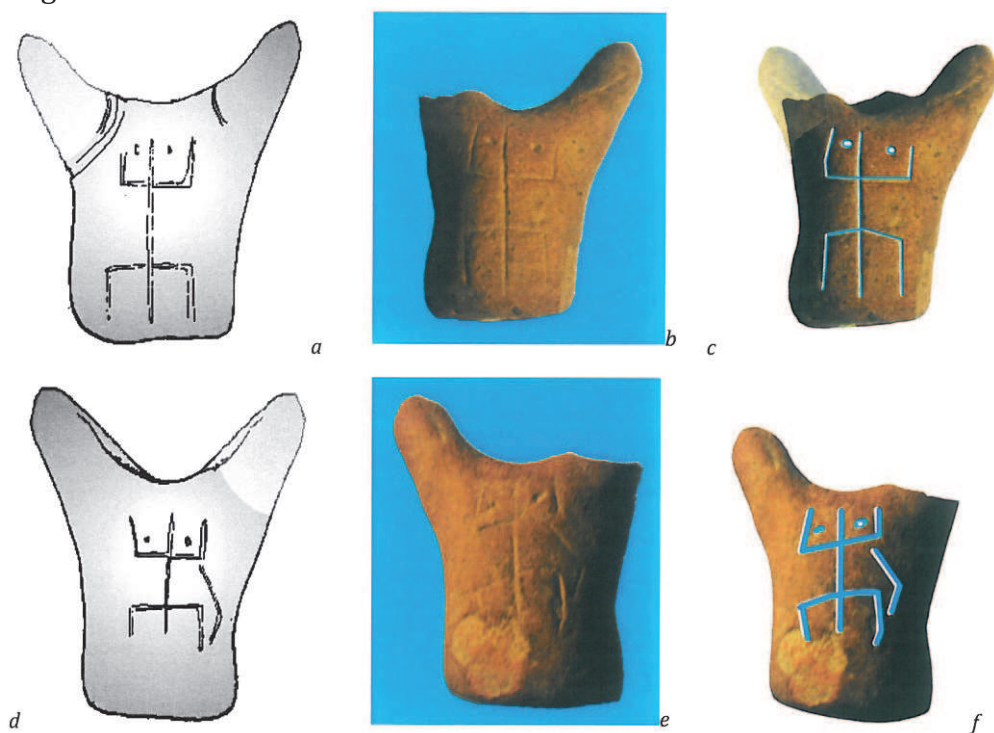


Fig. 56. Zorlențu Mare, Vinča C.

Besides, in the Çatal Hóyúk sanctuaries in some cases *divine eye* is associated with skull and a vulture carrying a human headless body (Lazarovici Gh. 2001: fig. 1, 2 and bibl., *apud* M. Gimbutas and J. Mellart).

Signs of this Zorlențu Mare piece have been made when the clay was partially dried, as we can observe to the „eyes” of fig. 56e, that being asymmetric were corrected (fig. 56f). Orant is associated with another sign, in the shape of a turned „V” or an „L” variant, by which is represented hand in *Danube script* (Lazarovici Gh. 2003; 2004; 2004a; 2009a: table B14, especially *codes 229i* and *229h*; Makkay 1990: fig. 18/7; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011: fig. VIC.35). We believe it is requested the help of the divine hand, and being on the left side of the idol is in relation with health, life, hearth, blood and other... attributes of the left side of human body. On the idol can be seen traces of rope from wearing on chest together with other items (see fig. 36).

35. At Parța monumental idols in L8 and Sanctuary 2; in Cucuteni culture, fragments of large stela with upraised hands, oranta type: Monah 2012, fig. 30/5-6.

36. In most of the cases in Cucuteni culture idols have only upraised shoulders, in very few cases being upraised arms: Monah 2012, fig. 30/5-6; 59/1-4, 60/1; 88/4, 89/1; 111/1, 9; 113/8, 129/1; 168/4; 205/1, 3-4; 207/1, 209/1, 211/1, 3 etc.



Representation of the house, of the sacred house

On a perforated ceramic fragment discovered at Zorlențu Mare was rendered through incisions a house model. We can imagine that represent a child toy, but the way the roof, walls are drawn is similar with those present in some of Turdaș; or spindle whorls through their rotation movement suggests continuity, time, succession of day and night, month, year, etc.

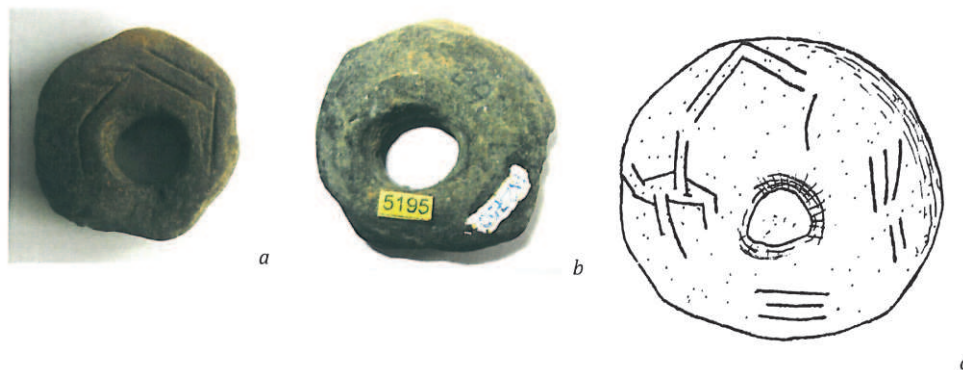


Fig. 57. Model of houses: a-b, Zorlențu Mare, Vinča; c-f, Turdaș.



Such drawings are not isolated, being depicted on Turdaș spindle whorls or on pots fragments that represent houses on piles, or with suspended floor, confirmed by new excavation (Lazarovici Gh. in: Luca et alii 2012: 100, fig. 43, reconstruction 6/L1). On a model of a small house from Vrșac – At³⁷(Vinča C level) are also schematically drawn more lines suggesting some neighborhoods.

Schematic drawing used for depicting houses and sanctuaries is also present in rock art at Valca Monica (fig. 58)³⁸ or in sanctuaries models of Cucuteni culture, some of them two storey.³⁹

The way houses are sketched on bones, stones, clay is similar, determined by material, and desired suggestion of the drawer (fig. 58) (some sanctuaries can be seen in these cases too).

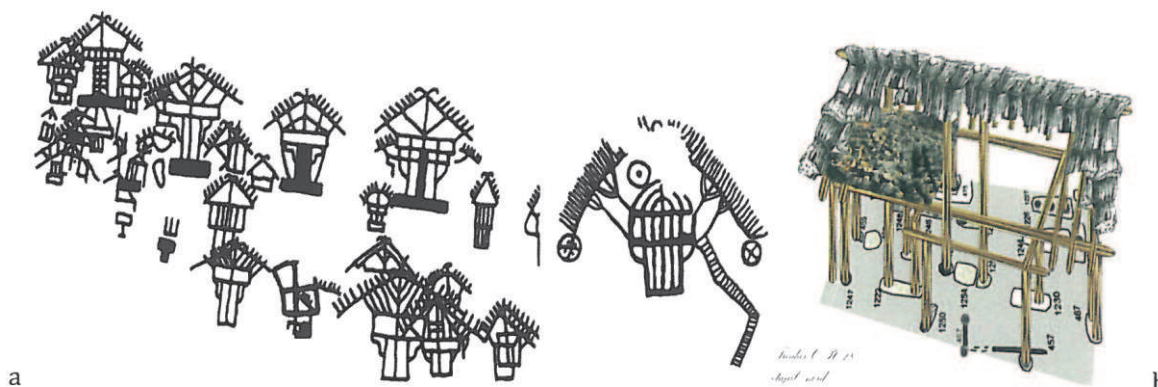


Fig. 58. Valca Monica▲; b) reconstruction of a Turdaș house▲.

37. Many thank to Mrs. Šarolta Jovanović for offering us the drawing.

38. Foto Gh. Lazarovici, Rocks 35, 50, 73 etc.

39. See typology and the new synthesis: Lazarovici C.-M. 2004; Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2009/2010.



Symbols, signs on idols, pot and other objects

At Zorlențu Mare there are some signs and symbols but not so many as at Turdaș. Zsofia Torma (László 1991; Merlini 2009: 105), J. Makkay (Makkay 1969; 1984; 1990 and bibliography; Merlini 2009: 108 sqq), M. Gimbutas (Merlini 2009: 108 sqq), Samuel Winn (Winn 1981: 64, 86; Merlini 2009: 132 sqq), Marco Merlini (Merlini 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007; 2007a; 2008; 2008a; 2009 see here also bibliography of these problems), Gh. Lazarovici (Lazarovici Gh. 2001; 2002a; 2003; 2004; 2004a; 2009a; 2010) and others (Haarmann 2008; 2008a; Haarmann, Marler 2008; Merlini 2009: 125 sqq.; Maxim et alii 2009), have investigated those of Vinča (Todorović, Cermanović 1961; Rasajski 1988-1989; Starović 2004; Merlini 2009: 160, sqq), Banat (Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011; Radu 2014), Western Banat (Jovanović 1981: 134; Makkay 1990: 35/I.2), or of *Danube script* (Lazarovici Gh. 1977a; 1977b; 1979: n. 310, XXIII/D2, 9, 17, 18, 29, 35; Drașovean 1995; Ursulescu 1998: 103, fig. 27/3; catalogues, analogies, interpretations; 2011; Merlini 2009: 161 sqq.; Lazarovici Gh. 2004 etc). Behind these messages are the transmitted symbols: water invocation (see down fig. 59, *code om19, 19i*), mother holding her baby or something else (*code 21*).

About them catalogs were compiled, studies regarding their systematization, analysis, comparisons, interpretations regarding their place and role, were made (Merlini 2009: 95-168).

Tablets, plates, discs, buttons with signs⁴⁰

From the same Zorlențu Mare site we will present some artifacts that based on their marks could be used as pafta, pendant, or button.⁴¹ One of this (fig. 59) has some holes to be fixed or sewed on a leather breastplate or a thicker more resistant fabric; we believe is a button for thicker clothes jugging after its dimensions and as results from orifices (Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011: fig. VIIC.72b).

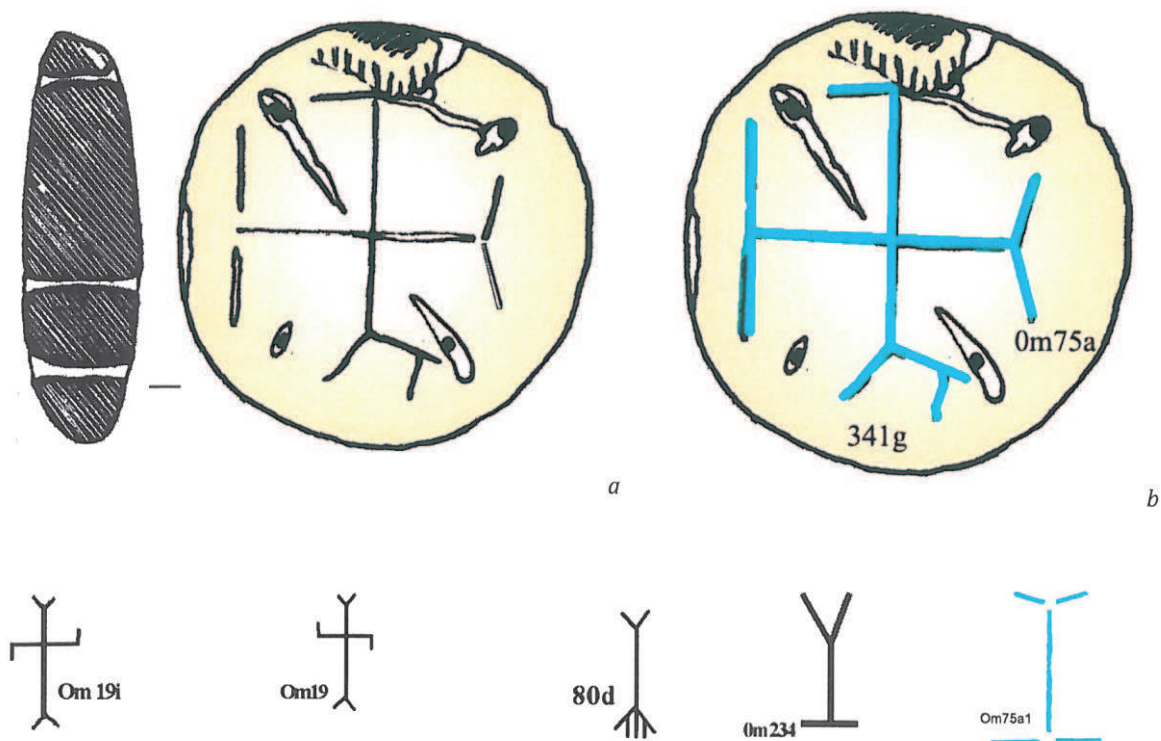


Fig. 59. Zorlențu Mare, level III, disc – pendant; c) analogies, signs, codes ▼.

40. Lazarovici Gh. 1991, fig. 6/3; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011; A Word catalogue ordered on geometric and thematic criteria and a database SCRIEREA: Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2006, which continues to be completed.

41. New inventory, 8474, 8476.



The tablet (fig. 59) contains signs and symbols that convey certain messages (regarding sexual symbols, virility *code 340*, regeneration, fertility *code 80d*, relation with divinity *code om 75a, om 234*) (Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2006, Word catalogue; Merlini 2011a, 133; 2011: 159-160; 2011c; 2011d) or rituals to be followed (Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011: 162-190). On its back side, no at sight, but with apotropaic sense there are two signs THAT WE cataloged as *codes 341* and *om 75a*. We believe that tablet play also role of talisman.

We can recognize a combination of figures more or less stylized of *Danube script*. One represent a man having on the head a „V” open to the sky, other an animal with a long neck (giraffe). About such animals there are only mythological information (dromedary, winged eagle, giraffe, elephant etc.) (Maxim et alii 2009: 152-153), not being known in the area of Vinča culture or in the Neolithic of Danube area (fig. 60).



Fig. 60. Codes:

a, Ronatj;

b, Ronatj;

c, Isaiia.



Fig. 61. Zorlențu Mare, Vinča B2-C, buckle 2.

The second disk (fig. 61a) having on the front side four orifices (three of them perforating the disk) also presents erosion traces of string or leather, evidence that was worn (fig. 61b). On the same side is a cross with a hook to the left and two lines. These can suggest a human figure (*code 75b*), as other such representations (fig. 61c).



Fig. 62. Zorlențu Mare, spindle whorl: a, front; b, back; c, detail on middle rounded area.

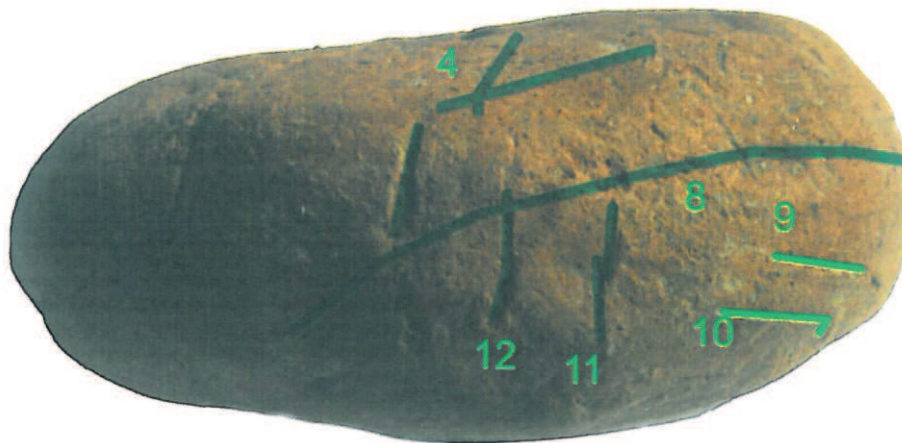
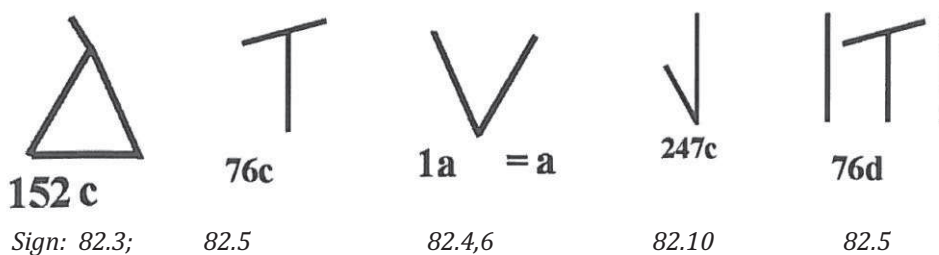


Fig. 63. Zorlențu Mare, spindle whorl: c, detail on middle rounded area; d, codes of signs.



Being two pieces is clear that beyond their functionality they have an apotropaic role too. A Zorlențu Mare spindle whorl (fig. 62) present signs and symbols that we find in *Danubian script*: „V”, „VI” „T”, „I”, „Z” and the like. They correspond to frequent object codes; being symbols they have different meanings related with place, type and object functionality.

We note that some form ligatures, probably with some meaning, on which once must insist. These sorts of signs we can find on spindle whorls of *Danube script* from Macedonia until Transylvania, at Dikili Tash, Fafos, Turdaș and Valea Nandrului (Roska 1941: fig. 127/6, 128/6, 8, 11; Vlassa 1970: 19; Gimbutas 1974: 41; Winn 1981, Jela, Fafos, Nandru; Makkay 1990: fig. 19/1-2; Maxim et alii 2009: 143-149). If we think that the spindles rotate in one direction or another then obtain a common logic, however difficult to interpret; spindles being round not knows which side to be seen.



Tablets

At Zorlențu Mare was also discovered a tablet (fig. 64) similar to the rectangular tablet 1 of Tărtăria. Zorlențu Mare tablet fits very well in the left hand between the thumb and forefinger (by curvature and asymmetry) thus sign being up.

On the front side space is divided by incisions in four registers. In the main area is a slashed semicircle. We have not analogies in our data base, but belong to a group of *codes 243* (Lazarovici Gh., Lazarovici C.-M. 2006: Word catalogue).

There are such sorts of clay disks with incised plans, regional images, fortifications, houses, as on Dudeștii Vechi tablet (fig. 65). Another fragmentary tablet, secondary fired, was discovered at Zorlențu Mare in the level of burned houses (pottery workshop level), fig. 66. On the front side incisions render a fir⁴² and other signs too. On the back side is present a symbol, frequently found in the *Danube script*. Is also present on two tables, at Karanovo (Schier 2002: fig. II/8) and Svetozarevo (Winn 1981, Svetozarevo 2), with code 50i (Drașovean, Martiș 2014). It has numerous variants (in *codes 50, 50i, 52*).



Fig. 64. Zorlențu Mare, Vinča, the tablet (inv. 8478).



Fig. 65. Dudeștii Vechi, Vinča A3 (inv. 11).

42. Fir tree is the symbol of eternal life, youth, being frequently encountered in *Danubian Script*: code 24*, 24b, 24e, 36, 36a, 36b, 36c, 202, 268, 278 etc.



At Sânanndrei a tablet with signs was found on the surface (Vinča C level); these signs are connected by Fl. Draşovean with black magic.



Fig. 66. Zorlenţu Mare, Vinča B.

Bread

About the sacred bread made by clay to be immortal there are many studies (see analogies lower). From Ohaba Mâtnic (fig. 67), in Liviu Groza collection it is a clay bread model⁴³ with vulva signs, surrounded by six lines as a lying „V” suggesting gestation period starting with fetus manifestation. Similar bread shapes can be found at Vinča (fig. 68). Other interesting clay bread with several signs was published by Aleksandar Mitkoski from *Treštena Stena*.⁴⁴



Fig. 67. Ohaba Mâtnic, Vinča B2-C.

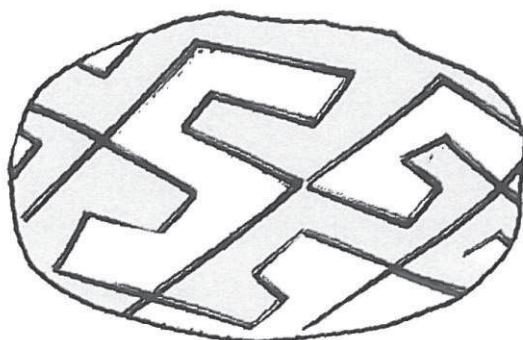


Fig. 68. Vinča Belo Brdo.

One of variants of this symbol, „X” render human figures dancing, as a relief symbol depicted on a inner part of a tray pot from Cioka (Banner 1960) (site of W Banat with Vinča materials). The shape of the pot, a tray, is suitable for baking pita, bread.⁴⁵ On their back was incised in this way the dancer, fig. 69, invocation suggested by figure and similar symbols (but not identical) of the *Danube script* (close codes om 67a, om 67b, om 77, 12a, 84a1, 40 etc.) (Lazarovici Gh. 2003; 2004a). This figure probably represents a dancer thanking divinity, by dance gestures, for fertility and food.

43. Sometimes noted as discovered at Balta Sărată, confusion related with collector; mainly artifacts have been saved from Polygon area.

44. Unpublished, kindly information offered by Aleksandar Mitkoski.

45. Round clay models are known in Cucuteni culture.



There are several clay bread models having a series of signs and symbols connected with fertility and sometimes fecundity a long period of time. Other time they contain only decoration, characteristic motifs of the time.⁴⁶ Pieces from Potporanj and Vršac – At (fig. 70), of western Banat area, have a decoration specific for Vinča C, composed of meanders and spirals. Between these, to fill empty spaces (*horror vacui*) there are signs such as „V”, „Y” and other (appearing on worship objects). On Vinča piece are traces of crusted red color, symbolizing fire, blood, food, necessary for life.

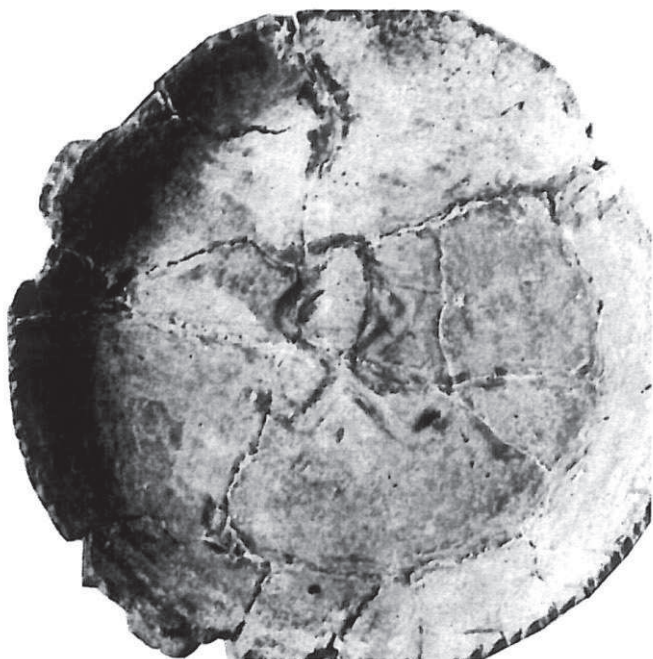


Fig. 69. Cioka, Vinča or Tisza (?) culture.



Fig. 70: a, Potporanj, Vinča C; b, Vršac-At.

Cross band, „St Andrew's Cross”, „X” sign, belt, diagonal

Among the elements of distinction such as belt (see upper birth and other) is also cross band, decorated with incisions (idols on thrones; or pieces of priest cultic inventory) (Makkay 1968; 1986; Müller-Karpe 1968: II, Kat. 238, 117/1, Taf. 187/1; Luca 1994: 363/367; 1997: 29, 65, n. 241, pl. XV/1; Hansen 2005: 23, fig. 19). This sign of distinction used for idols was underlined long ago (Comşa, Răuţ 1969; Lazarovici Gh. 1979; Radu 2014).

On some figurines of Zorlenţu Mare (Comşa, Răuţ 1969; Lazarovici Gh. 1979: pl. XX/A4, D5, 6, 9, E15, G4, 9 XXI A7, G5, H7) appears the distinguishing sign of divinity, represented by cross band (*Kreuzband*) or „V”, fig. 71-72, 74-75; these signs are depicted on several figurines of Southeastern Europe on different chronological moments (Lazarovici Gh. 1979: pl. XX/D9; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011: 117, 130-131, 147 and bibl.; Hansen 2007.1: fig. 250/10, 22; 255/1, 271/1; 321/3; 325/5-7; 328-329; 377; 407; 461-469; 472 2007.2: fig. 8/8, 82/6, 493; 494/3; 495/2, 4, 6, 8; fewer in Cucuteni culture: Monah 2012: fig. 103/3), but also on some lids (fig. 73) (Lazarovici Gh. 1979: pl. XXIII.A4, 7; Resch 1991: 189 D1).

46. Gimbutas 1982, 67; 1991, 114, 3.77, 6.12; Makkay 1984; 1990, 18/2a-c, 4; ***Idole Mainz 1985, 65-66; Trnka 1992; Lazarovici Gh. 2002a; 2009a, 65-86; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011, fig. V.13. At Krosno museum, Poland, it is a round clay model of Bronze Age decorated with pinchings.



Other times doubled „V” sign descends to the space between the breasts (fig. 72, 74), on some pieces is filled with lines that do not intersect (fig. 75a). To these „V”, part of cross bands (continues on back side of pieces) were given a mark of "rank", a social-religious position (Lazarovici Gh. 1979: pl. XX/D6, 9, G4, XXI G5; Banffy 2002: 218, fig. 4-5; Hansen 2007.2: fig. 250/10, 22; 255/1, 271/1; 321/3; 325/5-7; 328-329; 377; 407; 461-469; 472 and so on). The *Danubian Script* codes for these signs are: *code 1b6, 179c, 180h*. Sometimes seem to be stringed of beads of which hang pendants or clay plaques, shells, stone, bone, and later on made of gold etc (Roska 1941: 129/19; ****PrehistJugZem* 1979: II, XXXIII.1; LXI.5-6 Obre II, Butmir II culture; Comşa 1987: 177, fig. 24; Petrescu-Dîmbovița et alii 1999: 67 fig. 46-47; *Masken 2005*: 84, kat. 56; Gligor 2009: 204-206, CCVIII.2).

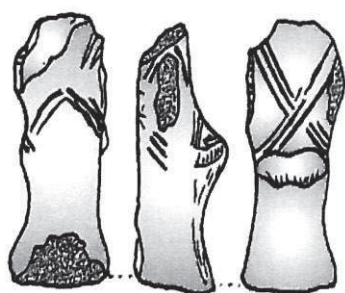


Fig. 71. Zorlențu Mare.

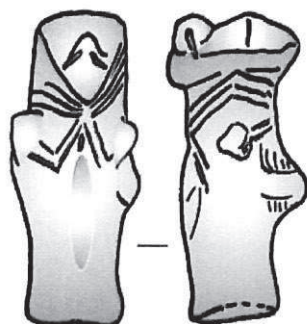


Fig. 72. Zorlențu Mare.

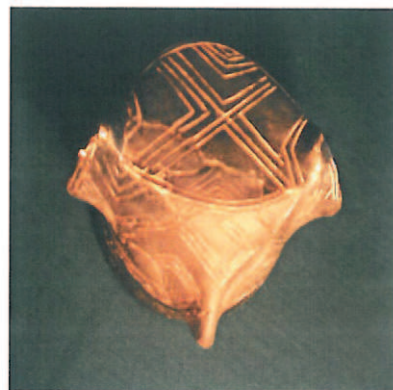


Fig. 73. Liubcova, after S. A. Luca.

Such signs have peaks in the middle of the back (without touching) and open framed arms (fig. 66).



a



b

Fig. 74. Zorlențu Mare (inv. 246).



a



b

Fig. 75. Zorlențu Mare (inv. 286).

In two cases symbols follow the neck line (fig. 72, 74). Cross band or „V” signs (*code 1b6, 179c*) are present also on idols depicting the *Sacred marriage* scene.

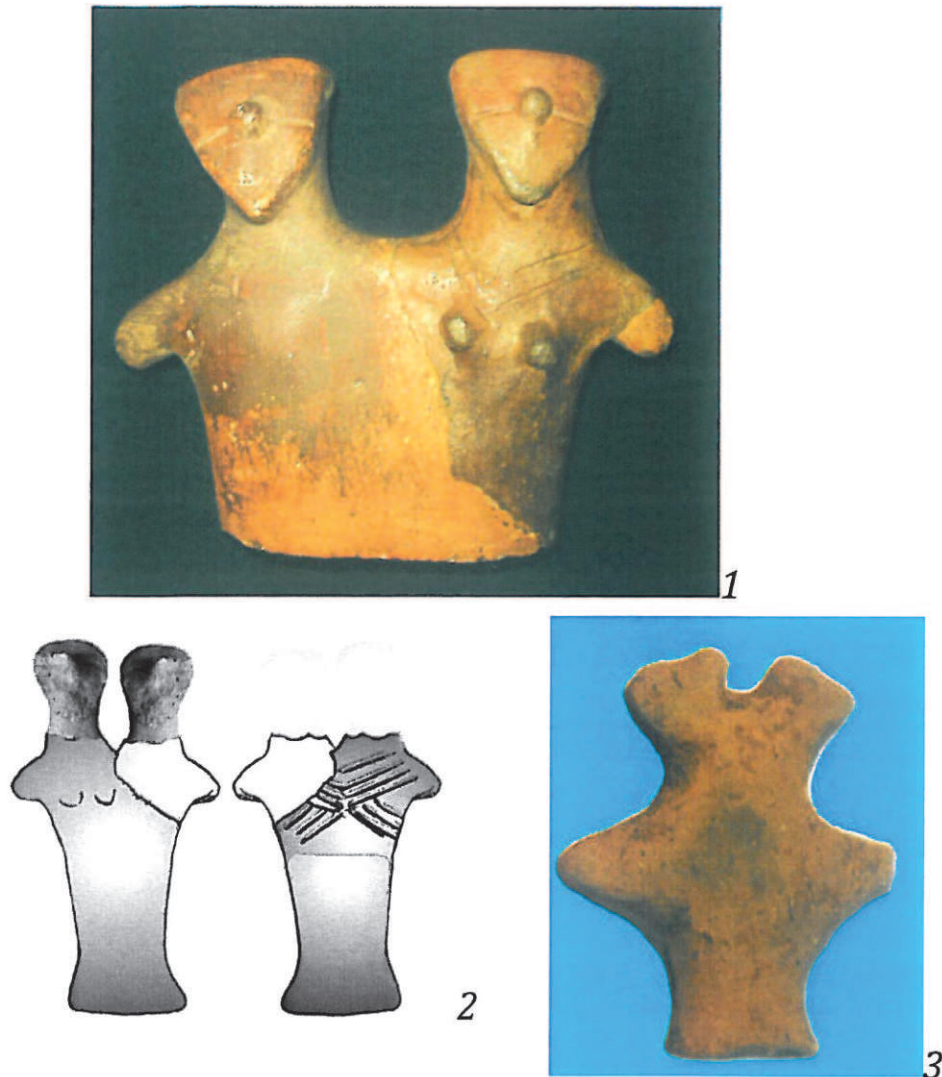


Fig. 76. Zorlențu Mare, hieros gamos, Vinča B.

Idols with two human heads are common in the area of Vinča culture, at Vinča-*Bielo Brdo* (Vasić 1932c: III, 514, 549, 512; Garašanin D. 1968: fig. 5-6; 1970: 12; Makkay 1971: 42), Gomolava (Brukner 1965: 149, pl. XVI.1), Rast (Dumitrescu Vl. 1957: 95) and other sites (Trbuhović, Vasilijević 1983: pl. IX.3/4).

For those having two bodies (fig. 76) forming together a „block” the best examples and models are represented by Parța sanctuaries (Lazarovici Gh. 1998b: 10, 2/3; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: 220, 231-232, 234, 237-238, 240, 226, 230-234), Trușești - *sanctuary 1 (L24)* (Petrescu-Dîmbovița, Rădulescu 1953: 7 sqq; Petrescu-Dîmbovița 1959: 63 sqq; Petrescu-Dîmbovița et alii 1954: 7 sqq; 1955: 165 sqq; 1962, sqq; Florescu A. C. 1959: 183 sqq; Florescu A. C., Florescu M. 1961; Monah 1997: 38, fig. 9/1; Lazarovici C.-M.: 2002; 2004: 47, 49 sqq, fig. 1) and other. Presence of monumental idols in Neolithic temples, and communitarian sanctuaries determines us to consider these as models for the idols of these civilizations. The association of the belly on Parța *Great Mother* statue confirms idea about pregnancy and conception.

The same situation is noticed at Trușești in L24 sanctuary, where the belly is located between the two bodies of the altar (Petrescu-Dîmbovița et alii 1999; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh 2007: 234-235, fig. Vd. 96), leaving to be understood that conceiving is related to both characters. Moreover, on the same there are some phalus heads (on some columns) meant to underline conceiving idea.

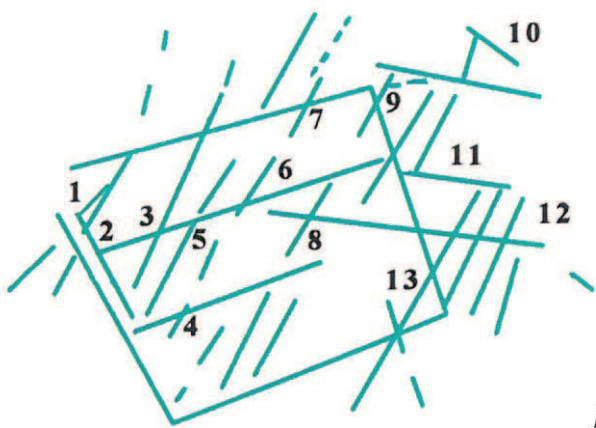


Signs and abstract symbols, the throne

From their study (fig. 77b) we find that most of them are combinations of signs, ligatures of *Danube script*. On a large head (maybe on a „priestess” altar, fig. 77a) there are several signs. Some suggest the house (no. 1), other the throne (no. 10) and already known „X”, „Y” and combinations. Considering that they were on crown of head, they addressed to the divinity: Great Mother (Lazarovici Gh. 1979: pl. XXD/1-3, 5, E1-2, K10, XXIA 1-3, 5B 2, 5, 6 C1-3, 5, 8 XXA 1, 4, 8-9 etc).

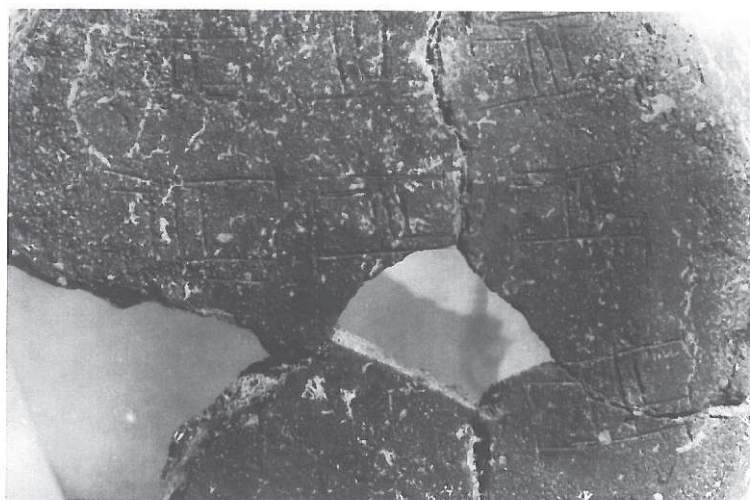


a



b

Fig. 77. Zorlențu Mare, crown of a large statuette.



Pot with seven thrones

(fig. 78)

On a bottom of a cultic pot from Zorlențu Mare, seven signs are incised.⁴⁷ The pot (a large one) was made by a common paste with sand, having a black grayish color; bottom was broken in four parts. From the upper side edges not preserved than 6-10 cm. The drawings were studied by S. Winn and put in his catalogues (Winn 1981: no. 60, 69, fig. 17.60; 104, fig. 26, Zorlenț 2). The seven thrones remind different mythological themes related to number seven.

About thrones and their meanings There is a vast literature (See Tărtăria: Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011: 164-165, 168-169, 174, 201, 203, 339, 314-315, 327, 337). From the biblical throne of Solomon (Eliade 1991a: 23; The Bible, Genesis I Kings 10, 18 sqq) and other famous, thrones play a special role in the world's mythologies.

47. Because of frequent moves and reorganizations the artifact was strayed. Gh. Lazarovici has just an older photo.



Throne appears in sanctuaries (Makarevič 1960: 282; Makkay 1971: 138; Gimbutas 1984: 74, 25; 1991: fig. 3-23.1; Hegedűs, Makkay 1987: Abb. 3-4, 9; Zbenović 1996: 33; Monah 1997: 255, fig. 3/1; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: 290, fig. 265; Lazarovici C.-M. 2004: 48, fig. 2; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 45-46, 115, 149), on sanctuary models (Müller-Karpe 1968: II, Kat. 138, Taf. 153/D, Kat. 270, Taf. 199A, 187/1; Sandars 1968/1985: 164, 246-247, fig. 159; Vlassa 1970: 19; Makkay 1971; 1990: fig. 16/1; Winn 1981: Nandru 1; Banffy 1986: 155; Gimbutas 1991: fig. 7.48.1), deities appear seated on a throne, like god with sickle and other divinities;⁴⁸ are included in religious kits (conclaves, synod) etc. (Dumitrescu Vl. et alii 1954: 420, pl. CXXI/2; Dumitrescu Vl. 1965: 226; *Cucuteni* 1997: 109, cat. 14a-d; Monah 1997: 35-36, fig. 5/1-2; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: 289; Ursulescu 2001a: 53-54, 65, fig. 7; 2004: 145; Marinescu-Bîlcu 2002: 149; Lazarovici C.-M., Gh. Lazarovici 2007: 112; Ursulescu, Tencariu 2007: 108-119), or are rendered as sign on tablet 2 at Tărtăria (Lazarovici Gh. 1971a: 22 ff.; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2011: 168, 567, fig. VIIC.8; Tărtăria, tablet 2.2, 170, fig. VIIC.9).

The idea that we believe can be drawn (and that meet broadly in Cucuteni culture), is relation between the 7 main divinities (Krammer 1962: 144; Lazarovici Gh. 2001b: 61), 7 judges and 7 questions⁴⁹ with 7 thrones (Monah 1997: 35; Mantu, Dumitroaia 1997: 109, cat. 14a-d; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: 289; Ursulescu 2001a: 65) or 7 priestesses with submissions of 7 grinding stones⁵⁰ and other combinations of 7: 7 columns,⁵¹ offerings of 7 skulls (Popușoi 1992: 20; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 118); 3+4 figurines at Drăgușeni in L9.2 (domestic sanctuary on our opinion) (Marinescu-Bîlcu, Bolomey 2000: 26, fig. 172/9, 175/8; Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh. 2006: 30-31, fig. I.18-21a), 7 figurines at 'Ain Ghazal (Rollefson 1983; 1998), 7 vultures at Çatal Höyük (Hodder 1984; 1996; Lazarovici Gh. 2001b and bibl.; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: 270, fig. 242), 7 terraces of the temple at Barabudur (Eliade 1991: 34; Lazarovici Gh. 2001b: 61), 7 pillars on some house models, 7 phalluses⁵² at Isaiia (Ursulescu 2001a: 65), 7 weights on sanctuary benches (At Sălacea: Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: I.1, 246, 286, 292; Lazarovici Gh. 2001b, 61; Parța: Lazarovici et alii 2001: I.1, 246, 286, 292, fig. 191; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2003: 164-165; 2005: 164, fig. 22), 7 benches (Neagu 1999: 22; 2000: 29-30; 2003: 92; Neagu et alii 2001: 85-86), 6 pillars + 1 small column at Căscioarele (Dumitrescu Vl. 1974; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001: I.1, 246, 286, 292) and other similar finds.

Sometimes on double thrones stands the divine pair (Monah 1997; 2012: fig. 261/5, 262/1).

No need to draw some conclusions since assumptions we launched and presented analogies can be simple converging. But not to discuss and draw attention on them is worst.

Repetition of situations such as the number seven undoubtedly show the existence of myths going to the Romanian folktales when it says that over the seven seas and seven countries....

48. God with sickle, Makkay 1971, pl. 3.5; Lazarovici Gh. 2006; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2001, 289-291.

49. In *Inana mythe*: Eliade 1981, 67; Lazarovici Gh. 2001b, 61.

50. *Balta Sărată* L18 and other: Lazarovici Gh., Petrescu 2001-2003; 7 grinding stones in circle in B1 at *Iernut*: Vlassa 1970, 169-174; Lazarovici Gh. et alii 2003a; 2004; 2005.

51. Vinča megaron: Lazarovici C.-M., Lazarovici Gh 2006, 195, fig. III.79, and bibliography.

52. *Lengyel*: Gimbutas 1991, 81, fig. 3-34; *Strelice*: Müller-Karpe 1968, II, Kat. 285, Taf. 208/34.



Annex 1 (Codes with M represent mask 6, codes with O represent variants of eyes, and codes with N refer to nose).

Anthropomorphic head M6 Gornea O6 Lazarovici 1977, XX/B2
Anthropomorphic head M6 Vinča O5 N6 Vasić 1936; III/109
Anthropomorphic head M6 Vinča O4 N3 Vasić M. III/51
Anthropomorphic head M6 Vinča O3 N5a Vasić 1936; III/145
Anthropomorphic head M6 Vinča O3 N3a Vasić 1936; III/151
Anthropomorphic bust M6 Vinča O3 N3 Vasić 1936; III/108
Anthropomorphic M6 Vinča O3 N3 Vasić M. III/53
Anthropomorphic head M6 Vinča O3 N1 Vasić 1936; III/97
Anthropomorphic head M6 Vinča O3 N1 Vasić M. III/38
Anthropomorphic head M6 Vinča O3 N1 Vasić 1936; III/48ac
Anthropomorphic M6 Vinča O1a N2 Vasić 1936; III/138
Anthropomorphic head M6 Vinča O13 N5a Vasić 1936; III/152
Anthropomorphic head M6 Vinča O13 N5a Vasić 1936; III/149
Anthropomorphic M6 Vinča O13 N5 Vasić 1936; III/106
Anthropomorphic head M6 Vinča O13 N5 Vasić M. III/50
Anthropomorphic head M6 Vinča O12 N5a Vasić 1936; III/76
Anthropomorphic head M6 Vinča O11 N6 Vasić 1936; II/139
Anthropomorphic head M6 Vinča O11 N4 Vasić 1936; III/65
Anthropomorphic M6 Vinča O11 N4 Vasić M. III/42
Anthropomorphic head M6 Vinča O11 N3 Vasić 1936; III/144
Anthropomorphic bust M6 Vinča O11 N1 Vasić 1936; III/111
Anthropomorphic head M6 Madzari O1 N2 Kolistrkoska 2005; 57/41; Zdrankovski
2004
Anthropomorphic M6 Anzabegovo N3a Gimbutas 1976; 219/1

Abbreviations

ActaArchHung: *Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, Budapest.

ActaMN: *Acta Musei Napocensis*, Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei, Cluj-Napoca.

ActaMP: *Acta Musei Porolisensis*, Zalău.

ActaTS: *Acta Terrae Septemcastrensis*, Universitatea „Lucian Blaga” Sibiu.

AMM: *Acta Moldaviae Meridionalis*, Muzeul Județean „Ștefan cel Mare”, Vaslui.

AnB: *Analele Banatului*, I-IV 1928-1931; S.N. I 1981-, Muzeul Banatului, Timișoara.



Apulum: Acta Musei Apulensis, Alba Iulia.

ArhMold: Arheologia Mdoldovei, Institutul de Arheologie Iași.

Banatica: Banatica, Muzeul de Istorie a Județului Caraș-Severin, Reșița, I (1971).

BAI: Biblioteca Archaeologica Iassiensis, Institutul de Arheologie, Iași.

BAM: Bibliotheca Archaeologica Moldaviae, Institutul de Arheologie, Iași.

BAR IS: British Archaeological Reports, International Series, Oxford.

BHAB: Bibliotheca Historica et Archaeologica Banatica, Muzeul Banatului, Timișoara.

BMA: Bibliotheca Musei Apulensis, Muzeul Național al Unirii, Alba Iulia.

BMAntiQ: Bibliotheca Memoriae Antiquitatis, Piatra Neamț.

BMMK: A Békés Megyei Múzeumok Közleményei.

BMN: Bibliotheca Musei Napocensis, Muzeul Național de Istorie a Transilvaniei, Cluj-Napoca.

CCA: Cronica cercetărilor arheologice, Comisia Națională de Arheologie.

CCAR: Cronica cercetărilor arheologice din România, Ed. Ministerul Culturii, Serviciul arheologic, cIMEC; CD; www.cimec.ro

CCDJ: Cultură și civilizație la Dunărea de Jos, Muzeul Dunării de Jos, Călărași

Cercetări arheologice: Muzeul Național de Istorie, București.

Crisia: Crisia, Muzeul Țării Crișurilor, Oradea.

Materiale: Materiale și Cercetări Arheologice, București.

MemAntiQ: Memoria Antiquitatis. Acta Musei Petrodavensis, Piatra Neamț.

PZ: Prähistorische Zeitschrift, Berlin.

StudiaAA: Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica, Facultatea de Istorie, Universitatea „Al. I. Cuza” Iași.

StComSibiu: Studii și Comunicări Sibiu, Muzeul Brukenthal, Sibiu.

ZOAO: Zapiski Odesskogo arkheologičeskogo obščestva, Odessa.

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